

HEAVEN upon EARTH:
OR, THE
BEST FRIEND
IN THE
WORST of TIMES.

Delivered in several
SERMONS,
By *James Jauway*, Minister of the Gospel.

The Seventh Edition much Corrected.

John 15. ver. 15.
*Henceforth I call you no more Servants,
but Friends.*

L O N D O N;
Printed for D. Newman, at the King-Arms
in the Poultry, 1685.

INTERNAL SECURITY

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

WHen I consider what a noble
thing the Soul of Man is,
the High end for which he was
Made, and the great Account
he is shortly to make to him that made him,
I cannot but wonder, That he who was
made a little lower than the Angels, should
make himself little better than the Beasts.

The great and dreadful God hath taken
much pains to reduce the Inhabitants of Lon-
don, and indeed all the Nation to the Obe-
dience of his Son. He hath been pleading
with poor England of late in such a manner
as is scarce to be parallel'd in fore-going Ages;

The Epistle to the Reader.

he hath left the print of his Fingers behind him, and written divine displeasure in Black Letters.

The Righteous Judge began his Circuit in London, and in that one City, above one Hundred Thousand received the Sentence of Death from his just Tribunal.

That was not quite Removed before another Amazing Judgment was sent to succeed it. The Voyce of the Lord was not heard, the Language of the Plague was not understood; wherefore the dreadful Jehovah spake Louder, and Louder, as he did once from Mount Sinai, in Fire, Flame, and Smoke, he rode upon the Wings of the Wind, he rode in a Chariot of Flaming Fire, whilst the Bells did Ring ther own Knells, as they were tumbling; and it's to be feared, were more melted at the Anger of the Mighty God, than Thousands of hard hearted Men and Women were. The Leads of the Churches were Dissolved into showers more easily far than stupid professors that were wont to sit under them. That was a Black Cloud indeed which no wind could blow over, till it fell in such Scalding Drops.

These Considered, I hope it will not be un- welcome, nor unseasonable, if I put you upon looking out for such a Friend as will provide

The Epistle to the Reader.

vide sufficiently for his, under all these Straits, and prove the Best in the Worst of Times. He knows Job upon the Dunghill, as well as David upon the Throne; he will be most kind when others are most unkind; he will visit you, when others will scarce look upon you. In his house you shall be as welcome as ever. There are many Mansions, if it were not so, he would have told you. In this city there is room enough, and you shall have entertainment, &c. be more welcome than if you had stayed away: His Doors will be open to them who have no Houses to hide their Heads in. Come to him ye harbourless ones, he invites you earnestly and heartily, &c. He will give you Shelter, you that have no Friends, or but sorry ones. Come to him now in your Straits, and he will never cast your poverty, or his Kindness in your Teeth, - except your Carriage be Proud, and unbecoming your State. God hath lately read us a Lecture of the Vanity of all Creature Enjoyments, and will you after this refuse Acquaintance with him, who will be better to you than a Thousand of the best Friends that ever man had upon Earth?

I have in the following Book given you directions how you may come to be Acquainted with him.

The Epistle to the Reader.

As God appointed Cities of refuge, so he gave express Command, that the way to them should be made plain, fit, and broad: And therefore the Messengers work every Year was to remove all Stumbling-blocks, and Offences. They suffered not any Hill or Dale to be in the way; and at the partition of the ways they set up in writting, Refuge, Refuge, that the pursued might have notice what way to take to upon every turn, Deut. 19. 2, 3.

*The like I have endeavoured in this ensuing Discourse, to make the way to this Blessed Friend, Plain and Familiar. Pray for a Blessing upon it, which Cost the Author some Pains, Prayers, Tears, and Groans; That what is here written, may be the Transcript of his own Experience, and be some way subservient to the Glory of God in the Conversion and Comfort of Souls. If you find any good in the use of this Book, give God the Praise, and labour to keep a constant warm sence of the Excellency of such a Friend upon your Spirits, and commend this Friend to all your Relations, and Acquaintance; that none of them after great Losses, may lose God, Heaven, and themselves too. O that will be a dreadful loss indeed! I again beseech you; forget not to pray
for*

The Epistle to the Reader.

*for one of the most unworthy instruments that
ever infinite Goodness made use of in so glo-
rious a work.*

James Janeway.

July 20.
1669.

Books Printed for, and sold by *Dorman Newman*, at the *Kings Arms* in the *Poultry*.

THe works of Mr. *James Janeway*, containing these six following Treatises, *Heaven on Earth*, or *the best friend in the worst of times*: *Death unstung*, being a Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. *Thomas Moseley* an Apothecary, with a Narrative of his Life and Death: also the manner of Gods dealing with him before and after his Conversion.

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HEA NEN



HEAVEN

UPON

EARTH.

Job. 20. 21.

*Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace,
thereby good shall come unto thee.*



Hey who have improved their experience of things by Wisdom, and gathered up the value of mans life, by comparing his desire with his Enjoyments, his Troubles and Sorrows with his Content and Joy, have concluded the worth of the life of man to be below nothing, they have drawn a black line upon the white, & shut up all in darknes. Thus *Jacob* of old in the account which he gives of his life to *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 47. 9. & *Job.* 5. 7. & also *Solomon*, who had an extraordinary measure of wisdom

dom by Divine dispensation, who had a large spirit like the Sand of the Sea-shore, he gave himself great liberty in trying what that good under the Sun for the Sons of men was, Eccles. 2. 1. When he had taken a taste of all the worlds Contents, yet he finds a bitterness mixed in all delights, which abideth no longer then the pleasure vers. 11. & 17. And whosoever shall enter into himself, and feel the workings of his own mind, shall be able to read over the Transcript of the same in his own Conscience. Who is he among the sons of men, that in his Natural life hath attained to a state wherein he was able to say, *Here I will stay, it is now well with me, I desire no addition to my present condition?* If there be any such, I dare undertake to prove him unacquainted with himself. Where now shall I fasten the blame of this universal evil? Shall we fall out with our life, as a thing not worth the having? shall we shrink unto our former nothing, and cast up our being and life into the hands of God, as that out of which we gathered nothing but bitterness and disquiet? Far be this from us, this were to justify that evil and wicked servant, who sayd of God, *That he knew he was a hard Master, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed.* This would be to accuse God of having made us to an unavoidable necessity of misery. How then comes it to pass, that we are all held fast in this common calamity? It is from thy self, O man, it is from thy self, this evil is because of our falling from God. It is a Righteous thing with God, that when man departed from him, he should reap the Fruit of his own doing; and indeed it is impossible for a creature of our composition

sure and constitution, but to feel it self dissatisfied with all wordly material employments, and to find trouble and disquiet in it self, while it is deprived of its true good. If we would have a true account of our disquiet and dissatisfaction, this it is. God made man of all the works of his hands, to be the nearest to himself, and hath fitted his principles for a higher life, then that which hath the things of this world for its object; but man hath made himself like the Beasts that perish. We have given our souls into captivity to our bodies, or rather, we are fallen from our Union with God, and are gathered up into our selves, and become deprived of a sufficiency in separation from God; then it must needs be, that we being gone down into a lower state than that which we were made to, should find nothing but dissatisfaction and emptiness: here we are by nature, and hitherto we have brought our selves by forsaking God.

Now the great inquiry will be, what Remedy there is for this our wofull condition; is there any way whereby we may be delivered from this misery? If there be, what way is it? These words which I have chosen to speak to, do contain the Answer to this Inquiry.

Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. This is the counsel of one of Job's three friends to him in the time of his great affliction. You have heard of the affliction of Job, and how his three friends came to relieve him with their Counsel; but the Devil who had a Commission from God to try his utmost with Job, yet sparing his life, made use of his friends, who are to be a comfort in the hour of
B. 2. of

of adversity, to be a great means of his disquiet so that he cries out of them, *Miserable comforters are ye all*, Chap. 16. 2. And the great way of their troubling him was, by misapplying, by making false application of true principles. In their Discourses there are many excellent Truths; yet by their hard construing, and ungrounded condemning of him, they by God are reprov'd, as not having spoken the thing that was right, Chap. 14. 7. yet in many things their counsel was suitable, and seasonable, of which sort, the words in the Text may be accounted. In this Chapter *Eliphaz* had been inquiring into the cause of *Job's* great affliction, and holding this for an undeniable Principle, that the righteous God, being the great disposer of affliction, did bring this evil upon him because of his sin; he measured the greatness of his sins, by the greatness of afflictions; he made account, because Gods hand was gone forth in an extraordinary manner against *Job*, therefore there was some extraordinary guilt upon him, *vers. 5. and 14. And thou sayst, How doth God judge through the dark clouds?* Thus we have his apprehension of *Job*, as one under great affliction, because of his great sins; and the Text is *Eliphaz* his counsel to *Job*, under this character; and so is suitable advice to those that are under sickness, or great afflictions, and that are under the guilt of great sin.

Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. The words are a Doctrine for the soul under a sense of its lost condition, with a Promise very comfortable upon the embracing thereof.

The Doctrine is, *Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace.* The

The Promise : *Thereby good shall come unto thee.*

These words, *Be at peace*, may be referred either to the former, as an addition to the Doctrine, *Be at peace* ; that is, keep your selves in a quiet submission to the hand of God ; or to the latter, and so *be at peace*, is as much as, *peace shall be to thee.*

In the Doctrine we are to consider the *Act*, and *Object*.

The Act, *Acquaint.*

The Object is *God.*

DOCTRINE.

So that the *Doctrine* is, *To enter into acquaintance with God.* This Position stands forth to the view of every eye, that it is the Duty of man to be *acquainted with God.*

Now the first thing that is before us to enquire after, is, What this *acquaintance with God* is.

Secondly, to evidence and clear it to be the Duty of man to *acquaint himself with God.* Acquaintance with God implies several things.

1. It signifies a full and determinate knowledge of this Truth, that there is a *God*, and so to know him, as to his Nature distinct from all other *beings.*

There is a three-fold knowledge of God.

1. *A Rational.*

2. *A Natural.*

3. *A Supernatural.*

First, there is a *Rational knowledge of God*, which is a clear discovery of an Almighty, All-sufficient Cause of all things. which is attained by a Reasonable discussing Power of the soul, which argueth from things that are visible and sensible

to an invisible and self-principled Cause of all things. Man found himself brought into the world furnished with an innumerable variety of Creatures, and none of these having power to make it self; we see likewise such an accurate order in every particular Creature; and in all the Creatures one with another, that we cannot but see clearly that there is a Supream Almighty Cause of all things, who hath by his power, brought forth all things into being: who is likewise the most wise Agent, who by his unsearchable wisdom, hath curiously framed every Creature, and by his wonderfull Council hath set them in such an order, that they all serve one another, till at length they all meet in man, as in the common center.

Secondly, ther is a *Natural knowlege* of God, which is the inward touch, and mental sensation of a Supream Righteous Judge, to whose tryal we feel our selves under an unavoidable bond, in doing good and evil. This is that which is commonly called *Conscience*: this a man finds in himself if at any time he have committed any secret sin whatsoever, which none in the world knows but himself: he feels it to be a pressure upon his spirit, as being under the examination of a power superiour to himself. Now this is nothing else but a secret impression that God hath made of himself upon the minds of Men, by which man is bound to stand before the Tribunal of God. These two ways of knowing of God were very clear to man in his perfect state, but since the fall of man they are much weakened, and decayed. ~~But~~ Thirdly, There is a *supernatural way* where-

by we come to know God which hath repaired our loss by *Adams* sin, and that is by Gods extraordinary Revelation of himself in his holy Scriptures : by these we may come to have a more clear distinct knowledge of God, both that he is, and what he is. To these three ways of letting in the knowledge of God into our soul, three mental Acts of the soul do answer.

First, a Rational Discourse, by which we find out God by the Creatures.

Secondly, an inward sensation, which feels God as just in good and evil.

The Third mental Act is Faith which for its Foundation hath the Word of God.

There is a Fourth way of knowing God which is by experiment ; which is when God manifests himself to his peculiar ones, and lets out the knowledge of himself to their Souls ; as when the Sun breakt forth with a bright shining in a cloudy day : but this belongeth rather to another head.

Thus you see the first thing imployed in this acquaintance with God. which is the lowest.

Yet how many are there that have little acquaintance with God in these signs ? may we not come to many who profess they know God, and yet among all their thoughts, they have had few or none to satisfy themselves concerning him ? How gross are the apprehensions of some concerning God ? Some men resist and stifle that Natural knowledge that they have of God, such as those, *Rom. 1, 20.* they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a Reprobate mind, or a mind void of judgment, as the word signifies.

days upon the bounty and goodness of God, and yet have not been led by the streams to the Fountain, from which all hath flow'd. Others can busie themselves all their time in o:her things, and little inquire into the word of God, by which they may be led to the knowledge of him; *See woe to those on whom the fury of the Lord shall be poured on, because they know not God, Jer. 10. 23.*

Secondly, *Acquaintance with God*, imploys frequent access unto God. We do not usually reckon our selves acquainted with any person, by a bare knowledge that such a person there is, and that we are able to give some General Description of him; but when we say we are acquainted with any, it is understood that we have been in such a ones company, we have come to him, and been with him: such is our acquaintance to be with God.

Under this Head I shall speak, First, *Of that separation that is of the soul from God.*

Secondly, *Of the return of the soul to God.*

Thirdly, *Of the abiding of the soul with God.*

First, *Of the separation and distance of the soul from God.* That corrupted estate in which every man comes into the world, is a state of separation from God. This distance is not to be understood as a Physical Natural Distance, for so God is near to every one of us by his Omnipresence, and by his infinite Power, sustaining us in our being and actions. *Acts. 17. 27. 28. Though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being.* But this is to be understood.

First, *Of a moral separation from God.* There is a great strangeness between our souls and and God: we reckon our selves to have little to do with him

him, and to be very remotely concern'd in him, we reckon that God takes very little regard of us, we look upon God as far from us, and we think God looks upon us at a great distance; we love not God, and think that God loves not us.

Secondly, this *separation* may be understood of a *Judicial Distance*, at which God hath set sinful man from himself. Man is kept out from God, as being unfit to approach to him in his sinfulness and impurities, and that is either in this life, in which condition every one is, *till he be made nigh by Christ, and set before the Father without sin in him: till they are born again of the Spirit, and justified, and sanctified by Christ*, Ephes. 2. 13. *Ye that sometimes were as far off, were made near by the blood of Christ*. Here this judicial separation is the execution of that terrible sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41. Thus ye see the Distance at which Man is from God, which is not Physical, but either Moral or Judicial.

Secondly, When we are thus separated from God, if we will be *acquainted* with him, there is required a returning to God. *Acquaintance* doth necessarily imply an Union: Now where there was a former *separation* and *distance*, there is required a motion to compliance, and a return either in both parties, or in one at least: so that before ever we can be *acquainted with God*, there must be a forsaking our former distance, the separation must be removed. Now God hath done what could be conceived, and beyond what could be expected towards the reducing of us, to an union with himself; whereas he might justly have thrust us away from him for ever, and never have

have given us liberty to come near him more as
being so filthy by sin, that his Holiness cannot en-
dure us: yet he hath freely set open a door of
hope for our return: he did not come thus nigh
to Angels when they fell, but they were turned a-
way from him, and are bound in Chains of dark-
ness to the Judgment of the great day: it is im-
possible for them to return any more. And so
it would have been for us, had not God made it
possible by an act of Free Love; and he hath
likewise revealed his willingness to receive us if
we return, yea, his earnest desire, *Turn ye, why*
***will ye die?* Yea, his rejoycing in our return, as**
a Father rejoyceth to receive a prodigal Son that
hath departed from him. But that God should
go further, to close with us while we retain our
impurities, and remain at a distance from him, it
is impossible, because of the unchangeableness
and simplicity of his Nature, and because of the
purity and exactness of his Holyness; it must
therefore necessarily follow, that a yielding and
return must be on our parts, or else there is no
possibility of compliance between God and us,
after that we have forsaken him by sin. And
this is most righteous and equal; for man did
forsake God, God did not forsake man; man
made the difference; man ran away from God:
God follows man as far as his Holiness and Un-
changable Nature will permit him; he calls to
us to return, he is ready to meet and embrace us
in the arms of his Love, and to receive us into
acquaintance with himself, as the Father in the
Parable met his prodigal Son, Luke 15. 20. *He*
saw him afar off, & had compassion on him, ran and
***fell upon his neck and kissed him.* Herein have we**
shadowed

shadowed out to us the great readiness of God to receive returning sinful man : but as the Prodigal Son must return to his Father, so man must return to God. Now it is sin that separates between us and God, and keeps good things from us, *Isa. 50. 2. Your iniquity hath separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you :* Therefore while we cleave to our sins, we are separated from God : till we are separated from our sins, we cannot be united to God. That ye see our separation from God, and our necessity of returning to God, before there can be any acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, *To our acquaintance with God,* is required an abiding with God. We reckon not our selves acquainted with any person upon the first meeting, or when there hath passed but a word or two between us ; but it is supposed to acquaintance, that we have made a considerable stay with him ; and have had frequent access to him. Thus it is between God and us : we must not only come to him, but abide with him, or else we shall never be acquainted with him, *Joh. 8. 38. If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples.* So I say, if you return to God, and continue with God, then shall ye be acquainted with him indeed. *Acquaintance,* signifies not a bare Act, but a State or Habit : Now this is the difference between an Act and a State ; that an Act is passing and is gone ; but a State signifies an abiding and continuance. There may be a drawing nigh to God, without abiding and continuing with God, upon some deep Conviction, or strange providence, or eminent danger ; as it is said, *In their affection, they will seek me early.* Yet

Yet they may soon forget and forsake God. This is but a seeming and practical approaching to God, a drawing nigh in appearance, when the heart is far from God : but that approaching to God which makes acquaintance with God, is abiding with him. Those that are acquainted with a spiritual life know these things what they are, and that they are the greatest realities in the world ; they know that sometimes there is a greater nearness of their souls to God, they are sensible of the approaches of their heart to God ; and of the withdrawing of their souls from God ; they know what it is for the soul to feel the approaches of God, and his smiles fill their souls with unspeakable Comfort : And to feel God withdrawing from the soul, this clouds their joy, and makes them go mourning : They can tell you at such a time they were brought unto his Banqueting house, and his Banner over them was Love : They can tell you at such a time Christ came into his Garden to eat his pleasant Fruits : at such a time they heard the voice of their Beloved, saying, *Open to me, my Sister, my Spouse, my Dove, my Dove, my Undeiled.* And when the soul hath neglected this knock of Christ to open to him, that then he hath withdrawn : *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.* These things are the experiences of a precious child of God, which I fear are little felt, and little known amongst us : but where these things are not, there is no acquaintance with God. For,

First, *They do know him.*

Secondly, *They draw nigh to him, they have near access to him.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *They have intimate Converse with him.* This is another thing required to acquaintance. We are not said to be acquainted with any person, unless we have had intimate converse with him. We may be next Neighbours, and yet have no Acquaintance, unless our conversation hath been mutual. So, it is between God and us ; there may be a nighness between the soul and God, and yet no Acquaintance between the soul and God, We are nigh to God, in our dependance upon him, we are near to God by his immediate providence and sustentation of us, and by his Omnipotence. There is a nearness to God by way of Dedication. As God set apart the Children of *Israel* to be a people near unto himself, so the visible Church of God is nearer to him than those that are not of the Church. There is a nearness of Dedication among us by Baptism. But all this may be without Acquaintance. There is therefore required to our Acquaintance with God, an intimate converse with God. We have great converse with those who are of the Family, or Society with us. Now such is our acquaintance with God, as those who are of his Family. God is called the Father of the Families of all the earth : and the visible Church is reckoned as Gods Family ; but in a great Family there may be little Acquaintance with those persons which be of remote employments ; but to acquaintance with God there must be such a relation as implies familiar converse. This intimacy that the people of God have to him, is expressed by the nearest relations in Scripture. As *Abraham* is called *The Friend of God.* 2. Chron. 20. 7. *Jehoshaphat* prays unto God, and saith,

faith, Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the
 inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and
 gave it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?
 And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a
 man speaketh to his Friend, Exod. 33. 11. John 15.
 15. Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends,
 for the servant knows not what his Lord doth; but
 I have called you friends, for all things that I have
 heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.
 Now by Friend is commonly understood a state
 of converse and society one with another. And
 this intimacy is expressed likewise by the relation
 of Husband and Wife. Isa. 54. 5. For thy Maker is
 thy Husband. Hos. 2. 7. Then shall she say, I will go
 and return to my Husband, for then was it better
 with me then now. By husband there is meant God.
 And the whole Book of the Canticles is a relation
 of the mutual converse betwixt God & his people,
 betwixt Christ and his Church, under the relation
 of a Bridegroom and his Spouse. Now what
 converse more intimate than between Husband
 and Wife? Such is that between a soul acquainted
 with God, and God. Again, this is shadowed out
 to us under the relation of a Father and his Chil-
 dren, 1. John 3. 1. Behold what manner of Love the
 father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called
 his Sons! And the holy Spirit is given to be the
 Spirit of Adoption in the hearts of Gods people,
 Rom. 8. 15. 16. To have received the Spirit of Adop-
 tion, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit it
 self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the
 children of God. What is signified by this Relation,
 of a nigh Union and intimate converse between
 the soul and God? And this is necessary to our
 acquaintance with God, even intimate converse
 with

with God. By this I mean a nearness of employment, when the objects of our employments are the same, then are we said to converse with God, when we are employed about those things wherein God is most. When there is, as it were, a mutual commerce and trading between the soul and God; man giving himself up to God, and God giving himself out to man; man taking up the interest of God, and God undertaking for the interest of man; these and such like actings are the converse which the soul hath with God. I speak of things which the men of the world are not acquainted with; but those that are acquainted with God, know these things, and upon the mention of them, their hearts leap within them. As face answereth to face in a glass, so experience answereth these things. When this string is struck, their hearts do harmonize; as when a Lute-string is struck, the other strings of highest concord with it move also. But these things are a mystery to the world, and they say as those of Christs word, *We know not what he saith.* And it is no wonder, for they are the actings of a Divine life, to which all are naturally dead, till they are raised to newness of life by the quickning of the spirit of God. But I proceed to shew what is meant by this acquaintance with God.

Fourthly, To this Acquaintance with God, there is required a mutual Communication. Where there is acquaintance between man and man, there hath been a mutual Interchange of conference and discourses. Thus when the soul is acquainted with God, there is an Interchange of conference between God and the soul. The soul openeth its wants, breaths out its complaint

plaints spreadeth its necessities before God ; God openeth the treasures of his love in his Son, the rich Mines of his precious Promises, and the secrets of his good Will to the soul. Thus *Psal.* 25. 15. *The secrets of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* *Gen.* 18. 17. *The Lord saith, shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Those that are friends and acquaintance, they will let out their thoughts and purposes one to another, and they gave out themselves mutually into communion one with another. Thus Christ knocks at the door of the soul, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voyce and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.* Here is Christ offering himself to the soul, and the soul is to entertain him : at another time the soul goes to God, and God entertains it ; God hath promised that he will open, *Mat.* 7. 28. *Knock and it shall be opened unto you ; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.* There are frequent actions among those that are acquainted : And by these are expressed to us the acquaintance of the soul with God.

Now the Communications that are between the soul and God, are exceeding transcending all communications that are between mens acquaintance. Men may communicate their thoughts, their estates, their assistance to one another ; but they cannot communicate their life, nor their nature, nor their likeness : but such communications there are between God and the soul that is acquainted with him. All *being* is a communication from God the first *being* : nay, the several degrees of *being*, have several communications,

ons from God, some greater and some lesser, spiritual *beings* have a higher Communication then natural; but Gods highest communications have been to man in that mystical Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature in Christ, and next to the Mystical Union of the Sons of God to Christ, and in him to the Father. Thus Christ is said to live in us, *Colos. 2. 20. I live, saith Paul; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Thus Christ prays the Father for his Children, that they may be one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they be one in us, Joh. 4. 17, 21. & Joh. 1. 15, 16. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, 2 Pet. 1. 4. We are said to be partakers of the Divine Nature.* This expression implies high communication of God to man. Again, there are high acts of communication from man to God (for though God receives not from man, yet man is to act as giving out himself to God;) such as to give up the will to Gods will. As that of *Eli. It is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good.* And that of *David, 2 Sam. 15. 16. If he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good unto him.*

Another act of high communication of a mans self to God, is parting with present enjoyments for future hopes, in confidence of Gods promise. Thus the Spirit of God works in the children of God a readiness to forsake Father or Mother, and Brethren, and Sister, and life it self for the cause of God. Thus *John Baptist* was willing to become *Nothing*, that Christ might become *All*; to be cast down, that Christ might be lifted up, *Joh. 3. 13. He must encrease, but I must decrease.*

Thus *Abraham* gives his *Isaack* to dye when God calls for him. Thus *Moses* esteemed the reproach or Christ greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11. 27. *Paul* counted not his life dear for Christ, *Acts* 20. 24. These have been the actings of the souls of those that have been acquainted with God, and such workings as these are the feeling of a child of God.

I have shewed you four things which are requisite to acquaintance with God,

First, Knowledge of God.

Secondly, access to him.

Thirdly, Converse with him.

Fourthly, Communication to him, and from him.

Fifthly, There is likewise required to acquaintance, a loving compliyanee. Amongst men Acquaintance implis Affection. And so it is between God and man. Never any soul was acquainted with God, that did not love God; and such a soul is an enemy to God; therefore very few are acquainted with God; but all that are not acquainted with God, are enemies to God. If we should come to a person that is not acquainted with God, and say, Thou art an enemy to God; this would seem a heavy imputation: but I speak it freely, thou, whosoever thou art, that art not acquainted with God, thou art an enemy to God; for thou art still as thou we'rt born: but we are all enemies to God according to our corrupt nature, and abide enimies till wee come to be acquainted with God. Love to God, and acquaintance with God go together, are heightened by one another. First, God lets into the soul by his Spirit a partial discovery of himself, and by

by this with the working of his Spirit, he inclines the heart in love to him. Then on the first working of the soul towards God, he lets in a clear light, whereby he draweth the soul to a further degree of love. A clear place for this, *Ephes. 3. 7, 18. And that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding: that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.* The love of God fits the soul to comprehend the glorious discoveries of God; and the discoveries of God, doth heighten our love to God. Acquaintance with God, makes us like unto God, as in *Job. 3. 2. We shall see him as he is.* And our likeness to God, as it makes us the delight of God, so it makes us delight in God; for the cause of Complacency and Love is a likeness between the Lover and Beloved. God doth not love us with a love of complacency, till we are like him, nor do we love God, till we are made like God. Now our beholding God, and being acquainted with him, is a great way to our being made like to God, *2 Cor. 3. 18. We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus you see that love is likewise required to our acquaintance with God, without it no acquaintance.

I have in the first part spoken of the Nature of acquaintance with God in five particulars. There must be,

First, A Knowledge of God.

Secondly, Nigh access to God.

Thirdly, Familiar converse with God.

Fourthly, Mutual communication between us and God.

Fifthly, An affectionate love towards God.

The next thing should be to shew that man is to be acquainted with God; but we will first take a review of these things. We have taken these things into our understandings; now let us set our hearts to these things, for in these things is the life of Religion. If there be acquaintance with God, then gross wickedness drops off, as scales from an ulcerated body, when the constitution of the body is mended. In acquaintance with God will be your only true comfort in this life; and the perfection of it, is the very happiness of Heaven. Let us then behold, till our hearts earnestly desire, till our souls be drawn out after acquaintance with God. If God be to be known, to be approached unto, to be conversed with by me, will he communicate himself to me? and I my self to him. Oh that he would love me, that I might love him! Oh blessed are they that know him, as they are known by him! It is good for me to draw nigh to him. *A day in his Court is better then a thousand elsewhere. My soul longeth, yea fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* Oh that I were received into converse with God! that I might hear his voice, and see his countenance, for his voice is sweet, and his countenance comely! Oh that I might communicate my self to God, and that he would give himself to me! Oh that I might love him! that I were sick of Love! that I might die in love! that I might lose my self in his Love, as a small drop in the unfathomless depth of his Love! that I might dwell in the

the eternal love of him? This is *acquaintance with God.*

Acquaint now therefore thy self with God, and be at peace, so shall good come unto thee. We now proceed to the next thing, which is to evidence it to be the duty of man, to acquaint himself with God. This then is that into which the whole Scriptures runs, as into a common Channel. The Scriptures are a discovery of Gods proceedings with man under a double Covenant, and this is the great design of God in both Covenants. The first Covenant was, *That while man did remain in obedience to God, God would give man free and intimate acquaintance with himself.* But if man became disobedient, then he should be dispossessed of an interest in God, and of Communion with him; which was that death threatned upon the *eating the forbidden Fruit.* The death of the body is its being separated from the Soul, but the death of the Soul, is in separation from God. Now immediately upon *Adams* transgression, man becomes unacquainted with God; so that upon the hearing of the voice of the Lord, *they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* What a woful case is man naturally in? He hath lost his acquaintance with God, and was in a way, never, never to recover it; upon Gods approach he flees. And such is the nature of all sin, it puts a man into a disposition to greater sins: Every departure from God inclines towards a greater. In the first Covenant this is the whole of it; it is both a command to keep nigh to God, and a promise of Gods being nigh to them, and a threatning of Gods putting them away far from him, man breaking the first

Covenant. The immediate effect of it was the sin of fleeing from God, quite contrary to that acquaintance. Instead of their former apprehensions of God, they seem to have forgotten his omnipresence: instead of peace with God, they have nothing but dread and torment in the thoughts, of God; instead of drawing nigh to God, they run away from him; instead of converse with God, they choose never to have to do with him more; instead of giving themselves up to God, they if it had been possible, would have hid themselves from God. Acquaintance with God is the sum of the first Covenant; unacquaintance with God is the misery of the breach of the Covenant. This is likewise the great design of purpose of God in the second Covenant. The second Covenant, is this: When God beheld man in a miserable condition, by reason of the breach of the First Covenant; in the unfearchable riches of his goodness, according to the eternal purpose of his good Will towards Man, he made an agreement with his Son to send him amongst a generation of sinfull Men, that if he would undertake to bring them back into acquaintance with the Father; he was willing and ready to receive them again into acquaintance with him; the Son being the express Image of his Fathers will, and person, hath the same good will to man with the Father, and is ready to close with his Fathers proposals; and so enters into a Covenant with the Father to satisfie Divine Justice, and to take away Sin, and to take away the middle wall of Separation, to recover a chosen generation, and to bring them back again to God. Thus he became the head of another Covenant

nant between God and man. And as the first Covenant was made with *Adam* for him and his seed; So the second Covenant is made with Jesus Christ for him and his seed. Because that the first Covenant was broken in *Adam*, therefore the second Covenant was put into surer hands; into the hands of the Son, the *second Adam*, the Lord from heaven. Now I say, that the great design and purpose of this second Covenant is in reference to mans acquaintance with God, is clear. This is held forth to us in that parable of the lost sheep, Luke. 15. 45. *When the shepherd had lost one sheep, he leaves the flock and seeks for that which was lost.* So when man was lost by sin, Jesus Christ leaves all, to recover and fetch home that which was lost, *Were all gone astray like lost sheep, as David saith of himself, Psal. 119. Christ is come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke 19. 10. and Ephes. 2. 13. 14. But now in Christ Jesus they who sometimes were afar-off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one.* In verse the tenth, is a description of our state without Christ, *being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, being strangers from the Covenant of promise, and having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is a description of our unacquaintance with God. But Christ makes up the breach, and that by a double Act.

First, by Covenant with the Father, to make man fit for communion with him.

Secondly, His giving man assurance that the Father will receive him upon his return.

This then is the great design in all those glorious accomplishments of Christ; for this he left his Fathers bosom, that he might bring us into
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acquaintance with the Father ; for this end did he who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a *Servant*, and was made in the *likeness of man* ; and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*, that he might bring man into a re-union with God ; for this end did Christ live a wearisome troublesome life among a company of Rebels and Enemies, as if a man should live among Toads and Serpents : So that he cryed out, as weary of any longer abiding with them, *Oh faithless generation ! How long shall I be with you ? How long shall I suffer you ?* For this did he make himself an offering for sin, that by taking away sin, he might bring men to God. This is the great purpose of Christ in all his offices. Ye have heard of the three Offices of the Mediator, that he is a *Priest*, a *Prophet*, and a *King*. This is the end of the Priestly Office. The purpose of Christ's offering up himself a Sacrifice, was by satisfying the justice of God, to make way for sinners return to God. This is the end of his Prophetical Office, to lead men into knowledge and acquaintance with God. This is the end of his Kingly Office ; that governing them, and ruling their hearts by his Spirit, he might effectually bring men to God, to acquaintance with him. Now then, since this is the great design of God in his great dispensation towards man, to keep men in acquaintance with himself, and to reduce him when he had lost it ; doth it not concern us to do our part for the bringing to pass this great work ? shall God lose his end in making us, and in settling man in the world

world every way furnished for his service ? and shall God lose his end in sending his son to receive us, when we had forsaken him ? Shall Christ leave his Fathers bosom to bring us home to the Father, and shall we refuse to return ? Shall he pour out his soul, an offering for sin, that he might make way for our access to God, *That we who were far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Christ* ? and shall we frustrate all by our refusing to go to him ? shall Christ come and offer us his help and direction to come to the Father, and shall we abide still strangers ? Shall the Kings Son come into our Cottages to invite us to dwell with his Father at Court, and shall we shut the door upon him, esteeming our Cottages better than his Pallace.

Secondly, It is the duty of man to acquaint himself with God, because therein is the improvement of his highest excellency. Every one acknowledgeth an excellency in man above all the rest of this lower world : Now what is this excellency of man ? Is it not that he is made in a capacity of knowing God, and enjoying God, and having Communion with God ? This is the height of his glory, Jer. 9. 23, 24. *Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exercise loving kindness, and righteousness in the earth, and judgment, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Yee see here, wherein man is to glory, for which he may value himself as truly glorious. In his understanding and knowing of God, man standeth above the rest of the Creatures

tures, in that he is a rational intellectual Agent. — This is part of the Image of God even knowledge, *1. Cor. 3. 15. which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* The higher any thing resembleth God, the greater is the excellency of that thing; now in this we resemble God more than any other Creature, in that we are knowing understanding Agents; and the highest improvement of this excellency of man is in the knowledge of God, and acquaintance with God, *Prov. 20. 27. The spirit of a man is called the candle of the Lord;* that is, it is a light set up in the soul, to direct the soul to a discovery of God. This is the highest improvement of our greatest excellency, and this is the excellency of man above other Creatures: this is that whereby one man excels another. Who are those whose names are, as precious ointment poured forth? who are those which have obtained a good report? Are not they those who were most acquainted with God; *Enock* is said to walk with God; an expression which signifies intimate acquaintance with God; and therefore was translated that he should not see death. And *Noah*, whose family alone was preserved when God destroyed the old World by water, he was said to walk with God, *Gen. 6. 9.* Among all the sons of men he kept close to God; and God took care of him alone. *Abraham* who was the Father of the Faithfull, he was called the Friend of God. *Moses* who was the Mediator of the old Covenant, he was said to speak with God face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, I might make mention of many more, who were the excellent ones of the earth; because they did delight in God, & God delighted in them, *Mal. 3. 16. 17.*

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*They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkned and heard : and the book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name : And they shall be mine; saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my Jewels. Ye see how God accounts of those that are of his acquaintance, that met together and spake of God, and that thought upon his name ; he reckons them amongst his jewels his peculiar Treasure : Such honour have all those that are acquainted with God. Ye see then the excellency of man above all the rest of the other Creatures. Now if man fail in this which is his highest excellency, he will become the vilest of Creatures. Every thing if it fail in its chiefest end and purpose, and highest excellency, becomes base and of no account : *If salt lose its savour (saith our Saviour) it is good for nothing.* If a man have lost his acquaintance with God, he is henceforth good for nothing. The mind of man is in his eye, by which he is to behold God ; now if this eye be blind, if the light be darkness, how great is that darkness ! The *Jews* in *Ezek. 15. 1.* are likened to a Vine, which, if it be barren, is good for no use : Shall wood be taken thereof for any work ? It is fit for nothing but to burn. So it is in man, his great use and excellency is his acquaintance with God : now if he fails in this, he is good for nothing. Verily, man is a base, vile, worthless thing without acquaintance with God. None are less esteemed among men, than they that want wisdom to converse among men. None are less esteemed before God, than they that know him not, that have not acquaintance with him, to converse*

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verse with him. Ye see wherein the excellency and worth of man consisteth, and that if there be a deformity, where ought to be our chiefest beauty, the whole is accounted as a deformed piece. It concerns us then to look that we keep our glory unspotted, our excellency in its due value; that we do not degrade our selves below what God hath placed us in. If we are not acquainted with God, our souls serve us to little purpose: it is causing the Soul [the Prince,] to go on foot, and to serve the body, which should be as a servant; it is to let the candle of the Lord burn out in waste.

Thirdly, Another enforcement of this duty of Acquaintance with God, is this. If we refuse acquaintance with God, it is a slighting the greatest of all the mercies that God bestows. Favours are to be valued, either by their proper excellencies, or according to the good will of him that bestows them: both these ways this is to be accounted the greatest of mercies. In Gods giving us leave to be acquainted with him, he gives out himself to be known, to be loved, to be conversed with, to be enjoyed. What greater gift can God give than himself? God is the portion of his people; he is the greatest portion, the surest, the most suitable, and the only durable portion. Thus they that know him esteem of him. *Psal. 73. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and portion for ever, Psal. 16. 5. 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, yea, I have a goodly heritage. Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. No greater*

greater mercy can be bestowed upon any people, family, or person, then this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is bestowed, it is the greatest; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewise to be the greatest favour. The greatness of the good will of God in giving himself to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his estate to them to whom his love is not very large; but he never gives himself but upon strong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands, he causeth his Sun to shine upon the evil, and upon the good; and the rain to descend upon the just and the unjust: But it cannot be conceived, that he should give himself to be a Portion, a Friend, Father, Husband, but in abundance of Love. Whosoever therefore shall refuse acquaintance with God, flighteth the greatest favour that ever God did bestow upon man. Now consider what a high charge this is; to abuse such a kindness from God, is an act of the greatest vileness. *David* was never so provoked as when the King of *Ammon* abused his kindness in his Ambassadors, after his fathers death. And God is highly provoked when his greatest mercy, in the greatest love, are rejected, and he of feed & join What could God give more and for himself than himself? And how heavy will this imputation be! These are those that look upon God as not worth being acquainted with. Let us therefore consider how we shall be able to stand to these Accusations. Shall we not be speechless, when these things shall be charged upon

upon us? Shall we not be confounded when we stand to the trial of him to whom we had offered these great Indignities? How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, so great a mercy?

Fourthly, It concerns us to acquaint our selves with God, for without it we are in a necessity of sin, and misery.

1. The soul unacquainted with God is in a necessity of sinning, *Ephes. 4. 14. Having their understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.* For want of acquaintance with God, every thought and imagination of their heart is evil continually, *Rom. 30. 10. 11. There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understands, there is none that seeketh after God.* Not understanding, nor seeking after God, is the necessary cause that there is *none doth good.* The soul of man is an Active being, which is continually in motion; if it be not in motion to God, and in God, it will be in motion from God. Hence it is that the Prayer of the wicked is an abomination: that which goes for prayer, God abhors, because they are not acquainted with him, *Isa. 1. 3. The Ox knows his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib, but Israel doth not know me,* vers. 13. 14. To this, saith he, *your incense is abomination unto me, their new moons and sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your solemn meetings.* Now the reason why there is a necessity of sin without acquaintance with God, is, because whatsoever is not done with a good heart is not good, *Luk. 6. 45. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good fruit,*
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and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil fruit: for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so an evil heart cannot bring forth a good action. Now without knowledge, the heart is not good. *Prov. 19. 2. That the soul be without knowledge is not good.* And there is no knowledge like the knowledge of God, and acquaintance with him, to make the heart good, *Hos. 4. 2. Because there is not truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; therefore by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, &c.* Thus want of knowledge of God, and acquaintance with God, we may plainly see, is the necessary cause of sin. Now there is no greater evil on this side Hell, then that of a necessity of sinning, *2 Pet. 2. 24.* Those of which it is said *they cannot cease from sinning*, are called *curst children*. He that chooseth any sin rather then affliction, doth it through the blindness of his mind. This is laid as a heavy accusation, *Joh 39. 21. For this hast thou chosen rather then affliction.* To chuse iniquity rather then affliction, is the greatest folly imaginable. It is one great part of the misery of Hell, that they never cease from sinning; and this is the greatest misery on earth, our being so much under the power of sin. I appeal to any gracious soul that hath the feeling of sin; what is it's great trouble and sorrow? is it not because of sin? What are his secret moans to God? is it not the sence of corruption? *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, saith Paul, Rom. 7.* He had been complaining of the mass of corruption that did still press hard upon him, and in the

the strong workings of his spirit against it, he calls it *The body of death*. It was as grievous to him as if he had been bound to a stinking rotten carcase. How wretched then is the state of every soul unacquainted with God? Who can do nothing but sin, because they want the right rule of action, a right pattern of imitation, a right principle for action, a right object for action, a right end for action, the only assistance of action. It concerns us then as we make any difference between good and evil, if we have any respect unto holiness and purity before sin and iniquity, to see to get acquaintance with God; because without acquaintance with God, we are in a woful necessity of sinning.

2. Without acquaintance with God, we are in a necessity of misery. Indeed sin is a great misery; and to be in a necessity of sinning, is part of the necessity of misery. But besides that there is a necessity of misery of another kind. What is the great imployment of men unacquainted with God? Men labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity, *Habak. 2. 13.* *This was the misery of men, because they know not God.* But in *vers. 14.* there is a promise of better days, *When the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* Then, and not till then, will there be a deliverance from labouring in the fire when there is the knowledge of God. The reason of it is, because true satisfaction and peace cannot be, till our desires and enjoyments are alike; and this cannot be, till the soul is acquainted with God: For, nothing can fill up the desires of the soul but God. The soul of man is mighty spacious, so that it cannot be filled with the world;

world ; and while it feels an emptiness, it still cries out for more, and cannot be filled till it be filled with the fulness of God, *Ephes. 3. 19.* The prodigal son had nothing but husks to feed upon, when he was gone from his fathers house ; he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, but could not ; they were not food for the soul. When we are departed from God, we have nothing to feed on but the world, and we would fill our souls with the world, but cannot ; for it is not food for the soul. *Acquaintance with God is the food of the soul, Job. 23. 12. I have esteemed the words of his mouth, more then my necessary food.* So that a soul that is not acquainted with God, is famished for want of food, *Psal. 42. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?* David was acquainted with God, but for want of an actual enjoyment, how doth he here breath out the trouble of his Spirit ? *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God.* The soul is still panting. Some pant after the dust of the earth, *Amos 2. 7.* These were of the Serpents seed, whose curse from God was, *Dust shalt thou eat* : but the seed of Christ, they pant for God, and they that pant after God shall be filled with the fulness of God : but he that panteth after any thing besides God, will never find any fulness : he will feed as upon the dust of the Earth. And what can follow but dissatisfaction and misery ? Acquaintance with God is the only way to be freed from a necessity of sin and misery.

Fifthly, Acquaintance with God is the duty of man, because God himself doth acquaint himself with man. Shall the King seek after acquaintance
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with the meanest of his subjects, and he refuse acquaintance with his Sovereign? shall God acquaint himself with man, and shall not man acquaint himself with God! It is expected among men, that the inferior should seek for acquaintance with the Superiour, and not the Superiour to the inferior; but yet God out of his wonderful love hath sought first to man for acquaintance. Thus *Prov. 8. 31.* it is said concerning the Son of God, who is meant by *the Eternal Wisdom of the Father*, that he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delight was with the sons of men. If God thus delights in converse and acquaintance with the sons of men, how much more ought men to rejoyce in converse and acquaintance with God? *Isa. 65. 1.* God saith, *I am found of them that sought me not.* All men were departed from God, and not a man that did seek after God; there is none that understands or seeks after God, yet God is found of them. The good shepherd seeks his lost sheep, before the sheep sought him, *Cant. 5. 2.* When the soul is asleep, it hears the voice of its Beloved that knocks, saying, *Open to me my sister, my love, my Dove, my und filed.* *Rev. 3. 20.* There Christ saith to the revolting Church, that he was ready to spew them out of his mouth, *Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man will hear me, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.* *Psal 68 18.* *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Is it not becoming then that man should open when God knocks? He seeks to dwell among the rebellious; is it not fit that man should enter into acquaintance

acquaintance with God, when God doth thus acquaint himself with man? Thus I have opened to you the Nature of Acquaintance with God, and evidenced it to be the *Duty of Man*, to acquaint himself with God; let us now make some improvements of this Truth.

USE I.

First, Is there to be an acquaintance between the soul and God? Let us then stand and wonder at the great condescension of God! This may surprise our souls with an extasie of admiration, that God should dwell with man; that the mighty *Jehovah* should have such respect to the work of his hands, *Psal. 113. 5, 6. Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high, who humbled himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in earth?* The Psalmist admired God, that he humbled himself to behold things that are in heaven; and now much more then is he to be admired that he humbled himself to acquaint himself with man? Let us then be filled with admiration, that God should take us so nigh unto himself. As *Psal. 81. What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him!* And *Joh. 7. 17, 18. What is man that thou shouldst magnify him! and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him? and that thou shouldst visit him every Morning!* Man in the pride of his heart seeth no such great matter in it, but an humble soul is filled with astonishment. *Isa. 57. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty One, which inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble*

humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones.

Oh, saith the humble soul, will the Lord have respect unto such a vile worm as I am? will the Lord acquaint himself with such a sinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open his Arms, his bosome, his heart to me? Shall such a loathsome creature as I find favour in his eyes? In *Ez-k. 16. 15.* We have a relation of the wonderful condescension of God to man, who is there resembled to a wretched infant cast out in the day of its birth in its blood, and filthiness, no eye pitying it; such loathsome creatures are we before God, and yet when he passed by, and saw us polluted in our blood, *he said unto us. I ve.* It is doubled, because of the strength of its nature, *it was the time of Love, vers. 8.* This was love indeed that God should take a filthy wretched thing, and spread his skirts over it, and cover its nakedness, and swear unto it, and enter into a Covenant with it, and make it his; that is, that he should espouse this loathsome thing to himself, that he would be an husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love unconceiveable, self-principle love; this is the love of God to man, for God is love: Oh the depth of the riches of the bounty and goodness of God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace past finding out! How do you find and feel your hearts affected upon the report of these things? do you not see matter of admiration, and cause of wonder? Are you not, as it were, lanced forth into an Ocean of goodness, where you can see no shore, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make a Judgment of your selves by the motions and affections that ye feel in your selves at the mention of this. For thus Christ judged of the Faith

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of the Centurion, that said unto him, *Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof,* Mat. 8. 8. *When Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* If then you feel not your souls mightily affected with this condescension of God ; Say thus unto your souls, What aileth thee, O my soul, that thou art no more affected with the goodness of God ; Art thou dead, that thou canst not feel ? Or art thou blind, that thou canst not see thy self compassed about with astonishing goodness ? Behold the King of glory descending from the habitation of his Majesty, and coming to visit thee ; hearest not thou his voice, saying, *Open to me my sister : behold, I stand at the door and knock. Lift up your selves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.* Behold, O my soul, how he waits still while thou hast refused to open to him : O the wonder of his goodness ! O the condescension of his Love, to visit me, to sue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me ! Thus work up your souls into an astonishment at the condescension of God.

USE 2.

Secondly, Is there to be acquaintance between the soul and God ? Then let us learn to make a right judgement of our own Excellency ; let us judge of our selves as too high and noble to converse with this base and beggarly world. I am of a nobler Original, then to debase my self to such mean things ; I am the off-spring of God, and shall I acquaint my self with earth ? I am of

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the family of God, and shall I converse with Sathan? Is there bread enough in my Fathers house, and shall I perish for hunger? Lift up thy self, O my soul, shake off the intanglements of the flesh, break out of that bondage of the Devil, trample upon the glory of the world, and scorn to let out thy precious desires upon dung and dross; get the Moon under thy feet, cloath thy self with the Sun, put on the Son of Righteousness, come in to the palace of God, and acquaint thy self with him: for this is thy glory, this is thy excellency. Ye precious one, who can call God Father, and the Son Brother, who have fellowship with the Father and the Son, who may have communion with the Holy Ghost? What do you lying among the the Pots? What do you raking in Dunghills? What do you conversing with the World? Have a holy scorn of these things as below the dignity of your souls: know your worth: esteem of your selves, as of more value then all these lower Treasures. This is your glory and your excellency, that ye are of Gods acquaintance, that ye are Sons of God, Heirs of God, and joynt-Heirs with Christ, that ye understand and know God.

There are two things wherein most men are mistaken.

First, In the Nature of Pride. Some look upon that only as Pride, which manifesteth it self in costly Apparel, and bodily Ornaments, beyond the degree and rank of the person. Some look no further than the carriage of one man towards another. Now favourably consider with me, that the greatest Pride in the world is mans undue esteem of himself toward God; and this

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is in the heart of every one by nature. Every one by nature doth lift up himself against God, goes about to dethrone God, and to crown himself? Every one takes counsel in his heart against the Lord, saying, *Let us break h's bands asunder, and cast his cords from us.* This is the voice of every one that dares willfully to sin. *We will not have God to rule over us.* Yet this is the working of the Pride of a man against God, to thrust God out of the Throne of his Majesty, and to set himself in. For what is Gods glory and respect among his creatures? Is it not this; that he being the *beginning*, and *Author of all*, should be likewise the *end of all*? And this is the very purpose of God in making of man, that having received himself from God, he should have what he might freely give up to God; so that all man is, and all that he hath, is to be offered to God, as the end and center of all. Now a sinning creature brings God under to serve him, to provide for him. Now though this Pride of man against God be not so much taken notice of, yet it is the very daring sin of the World. It is indeed to be wondered at, that every creature did cast out the first thoughts of such an attempt. Now consider how far mans Pride is from his true Excellency in his Union with God. We are therefore to distinguish between that high esteem that man is to have of himself, and pride. For man to look upon himself as a *noble being*, and of rank above all the *natural world*, it is not Pride, for thus he is (being a Spiritual understanding Agent) in a capacity of being acquainted with God, of being united to God, and, as I may say, of exchanging himself with God.

Secondly. Another mistake of most men is; concerning their *Dignity* and *Excellency*, and in the rule and measure of their *Excellency*. Most measure their *Dignity* by the advantage which they have over others in this world; As some in their Power and Authority: some in their Friends and Relations; some in their Riches, and Estates; some in their Wisdom and Faculties; some in their strength and Power. And what more universal evil is there then this, for every one into something or other to lift himself up in his own esteem, and in his thoughts to tread upon others, as something inferior to himself? But men ly blinded in their own delusions, not considering what is the true Excellency of man; nor know the right rule by which mans worth is to be judged of. The way for us to judge rightly concerning our selves, is to see how we stand towards God. God is the perfection of excellency; and the nigher we are to God, the greater is our excellency. This is the greatness of a Nation to be nigh to God, *Deut. 4. 7. What Nation is there so great which hath God so nigh unto them?* And *Amos 8. 7.* God is called the Excellency of *Jacob*. God sweareth not by any thing below himself; therefore God is here meant, *Isa. 60. 19.* God is called the *Glory of his people*. *The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy Glory.* Now God is the glory of those that are acquainted with him.

First, By vertue of the Relation wherein God stands towards them. An intimate Relation to those that are persons of Dignity, & Worth, doth communicate Worth and Dignity to those who are so related to them. As the Son of a mean man

is not so highly valued and esteemed as the son of a Prince. *David* reckoned it to be a great thing to be Son in law to a King, 1. *Sam.* 18. 8. *Who am I, and what is my life, or my Fathers Family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the King?* Thus are we to reckon it our Dignity and Excellency to be in nigh relation to God, to be sons of God, to be heirs of God, and to be the friends of God; what greater honour then this to be in such a nigh relation to the God of Glory? Now the Excellency that we have from this Relation, ariseth from the excellency of that act which is the Foundation of this Relation, and that is our being born of God, as we are Sons, *Joh.* 1. 12. 13. God marrying us to himself as he is our husband, *Jer.* 3. *Turn, O back-sliding Children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you.* God takes us into fellowship and communion, & acquaintance with himself, as he makes us his friends, and his acquaintance. This act of God doth instamp a Worth and Excellency upon man, as the impression of the Kings Seal upon Wax, and makes it of value, *Rev.* 22. 4. It is here spoken as the glory of the servants of God, *Those that follow the Lamb, they shall see his face, and his Name shall be in their foreheads;* that is, God hath chosen, and as it were marked them out for his own: and this marking them, and owning them, it sets a high Dignity upon them, such as secures them from the Curse that is to be upon all besides, as *Revel.* 9. 4. They are commanded to hurt none but those who have not the seal of God on their foreheads. This Relation of the soul to God, gives the soul an excellency, as it doth interest the soul in the glory and excellency of God himself; they are Gods, and God is theirs, 2. *Cor.* 6. 16. *I will*

will dwell in them, and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, vers. 17. He argues from the dignity of this relation, that they should count themselves too good to converse with the world; Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separated, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord. Thus you see the dignity that is upon the soul by its acquaintance with God. Our relation to God in our acquaintance with him, doth ennoble us, lift us above the world, make us that we are too good for the company of those that are not acquainted with God. It is then no pride in us thus to esteem of our selves, to have high thoughts of our selves, because of that acquaintance which our souls are to have with God. It is pride for to think too highly of our selves: but it is sobriety to think of our selves according to that acquaintance which we have with God, Rom. 12. 3. I say through the grace of God given to me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himself more highly then he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Here the Apostle commands them to measure the esteem which they have of themselves by the measure of faith which they have from God; because by faith they come to be valued excellent in the eye of God. So likewise we are to measure our esteem which we have of our selves, by the measure of our acquaintance which we have with God! because by acquaintance with him, we come to be truly excellent. And while we do thus, we shall not think more highly of our selves then we ought to think: for
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while we account our selves excellent because of our acquaintance with God, we in lifting up our selves magnifie God; and while we thus glory, we glory in the Lord. 1. Cor. 1. 31. But now herein we are to beware of two things.

First, That we distinguish carefully between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our being actually acquainted with him: for our capacity, or being so as that we may be acquainted with God, is of no worth, unless we be actually acquainted with him. We are in a remote capacity naturally as men, and we are in a more nigh capacity by the mercy and covenant of God; but this adds no true worth to the soul without the actual acquaintance of the soul with God. Yea, man is the worse for this, if he be without the other; for if man being made fit for enjoyment of God, and communion with him, and never attain to an enjoyment of him, he becomes more vile then those things whose nature is inferiour, if they attain to the perfection of that nature. And it is like to fare worse with man, if he fall short of the glory of God, because he was capable of the glory of God, than with beasts which are not capable of it. And again, in regard of that more nigh capacity wherein we are by Jesus Christ of acquaintance with God, if we are not really acquainted with God. we shall thereby not only have no addition of excellency, but thereby we shall be more vile and miserable: and therefore those who through the mercy of God have been in the visible Church, and have heard of the good will of God to man through Christ, and know that God is ready to entertain them into acquaintance with himself; if they shall fall

short of this, their condemnation will be greater then that of those who never heard of Gods invitation, and his grace in Jesus Christ. If we therefore shall glory in our capacity of being of the acquaintance of God, and neglect to be really acquainted with him, we do but as the *Jews* of old, who cried out, *The Temple of the Lord are these*, Jer. 7. 4. And the nigher we are to God, if we do not come to a throw closure with him, the nigher we are to the stroak of his Wrath: as the nigher any is to Musket-shot, the greater will the force of it be upon him. Distinguish therefore between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our actual acquaintance with him.

Secondly, we must beware lest in our esteem of our selves, we lay the foundation of our glory in our selves. There is that in every ones corrupt nature which doth provoke him to it: so that I dare boldly say, that there is not a man in his corrupt natural state, who doth not some way or other lift up himself in his own esteem for something of his own. And we are apt to make every spiritual excellency to be matter for pride and self-conceitedness. We do not sufficiently eye God as the Fountain, the Author, the Foundation, the Rule and Pattern of all our Excellency. Such is the way wherein God receiveth man to acquaintance with himself, that he might hide pride from his eyes, and that no flesh might glory in his presence, 1 Cor. 1. 29. If we therefore lay the foundation of our glory in our selves, and please our selves in the sparks that we have kindled, we glory in our shame, and lie down in sorrow. This high esteem which we are to have of
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our selves, because of our acquaintance with God, it doth not at all contradict that precious grace of humility, but they rather help forward one another; for the more any esteems of himself, because of that relation which he hath to God, the less is the esteem of himself, because of any thing of his own; the more we make God the matter of our glory, the less do we glory in our selves. The more we apprehend of our excellency, being from God, the less account do we make of all other seeming Excellencies. When the light of the Sun ariseth, then all Star-light disappears.

First, All Dignity we have, seems to arise from that relation which we have to God in acquaintance with him.

Secondly, By acquaintance with God we come to have an absolute positive Dignity which is real in our persons, yet still depending upon God: As by our union with Christ we come to have a righteousness imputed, which is our justification, and a righteousness likewise inherent, which is our sanctification; so by our acquaintance with God, we have a dignity, as it were, imputed by our relation to God, and a dignity real, which is that excellency whereby we are made absolutely better. By acquaintance with God we come to be like God; and the Image of God in us, is the greatest excellency that we are capable of. When *Moses* had been forty days in the Mount with God, his face did shine with such a brightness, that the people could not behold him: so those that converse with God, they retain a luster, which shines in their converse with men. The Image or picture of any worthy person, is esteem-
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ed by them that esteem the person, and this esteem of it, is from a relation which it hath to that person; but now the children of any person whom we love, being a lively image of their fathers person, have another value upon them, having not only a relation worthy, because of their resemblance in the outward lineament, but a real participation of nature and disposition, which they receive from their father: So there is an excellency in those that are acquainted with God, not only as being in Relation to him, but as receiving, and being partakers of the Divine Nature. As Children learn to pronounce their words according to the pronounciation of the Mother, or Nurse, with whom they converse, (as every one is apt to be formed unto the manner and disposition of the company wherein they most usally are); thus those who converse with God, they become in some measure like unto God; and this is positive personal excellency which those have which converse with God. Thus the Apostle *Joh* urgeth concerning that perfection of glory and excellency, which hereafter is to be upon those that are the Sons of God. *But it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* In Heaven we shall be like God, because we shall see God; and on earth those that converse with God, shall in some measure be like God according to their measure of acquaintance with him. And so *Paul* argues concerning this present life, *2. Cor. 3. 18. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the*

the Lord. Here we see clearly that beholding the glory of the Lord, doth change into the same image of God, and likewise that this image of God only is the glory of man; for that is meant by, *From glory to glory*: that is, from one degree of glorious similitude, to another degree of glorious resemblance and likeness to God. Thus ye have seen that the excellency of man consisteth in his acquaintance with God; and that by the vertue of his relation to God, he hath an imputed excellency; and an excellency by his propriety in God, in whom is all excellency: and that by his converse with God, and acquaintance with him, he becomes really like God, which is his inherent excellency. Let us then reckon of our selves as those who have their Dignity and Excellency from God, and in this let us glory, That we know God, and are acquainted with God. The is the *Second Use* of this Proposition.

USE 3.

Thirdly, If man ought to be acquainted with God, then let us all enquire into our selves; whether we are acquainted with him or no. Let us every one turn into our own bosoms, and ask our selves this question; Thou hast heard, O my soul, that which is thy great Duty, that which is the very end of thy Creation, and thy Redemption, and that the highest perfection of thy noblest faculty consists in knowing God, and being acquainted with him, which contains a high union to him, and intimate converse with him, and mutual communion to God, and from God

God, and radicated unmoveable love to God : these are excellent things O my soul, what is thy case ? Art thou one of those precious ones, which conversest oft with God, and talk oft of God, whom he will make up with his Jewels ? Or art thou one of those wretched Creatures, who are alienated from the life of God by reason of the ignorance that is in thee ? Or art thou one of those who having been sometimes afar off, art now made nigh to God by the blood of Christ, and so art led into fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit ? Or art thou one of those who looks upon God afar off, and upon whom God looks afar off ? I beseech you every one of you deal seriously and accurately with your selves in this inquiry, for it is most certain, that most men in the world, yea in the visible Church, are not acquainted with God. Thus it hath been in all generations from the beginning of the World, and thus it is at this day : the people of God have been like a little flock of sheep, while the rest are like locusts, covering the whole face of the earth. The people of God have still complained that they are but as the gleaning of the vintage, and as two or three Olive-berries in the top of the utmost branches, when the rest have been gathered. The visible Church of God, in respect of the rest of the world, how small a part is it ! In the visible Church, how few live up to their Religion, by any considerable profession ! How little difference is there between most among us, and Heathens ! And of those that profess, and lay claim to something beyond others among whom they live, how many betray their Profession by their

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their wicked Practice and worldly Conversation? So that when we have made Enquiry, there will remain very few of those that are really Acquainted with God; it concerns us then to be very diligent in Inquiry, what is our case how we stand towards God.

Secondly, I shall be the more earnest in pressing you upon a diligent search into what Acquaintance you have gotten with God; because, I know that those that have least Acquaintance with God, are most apt to neglect this Enquiry. It may be a tender soul that hath been much with God, will be ready upon the first hint to enter into the secrets of his own Heart, to look over his evidences, to call to mind, when have I drawn nigh to God? When have I conversed with God? When have I Communion with God? Hath my Life been a walking with God? Have I dwelt with God, and made my abode with him? Thus the Soul that makes high account of its acquaintance with God, will be trying and examining it self; and it may be upon its more awakened signs of its sometimes departing from God, or feeling some present strangeness, it will be apt to conclude of it self, surely I am none of those precious ones, whose life is a converse with God, But the common generation of the World. Oh how hardly will they be brought to ask themselves this question, whether they are of the acquaintance of God or no! How often have they been urged with a great and vehement affection upon tryal, how their souls stand towards God? and hitherto they have neglected it. Many are inconsiderate as to think what is spoken is nothing to them: they come and sit in the Congregation,

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gregation, but their hearts are out of reach, out of the shot of the Word; so they go away, and the word to them is, as if it had not been. Many are so light and vain, and frothy in their spirits, as that the streams will almost as soon return to their Fountain, as they will be perswaded to turn in and enquire into their own Souls. In all Naturally there is an averfness to come to the Light, that their Works and Hearts may be Manifested. If I should come to you one by one, and beseech you with the greatest earnestness, where-with I were able, when you go from the Congregation to take Opportunity to go in Secret, and enter upon Tryal with your Hearts, and ask your selves throughly this Question, and let them not alone till you have a clear determinate Answer, whether you are in a State of Acquaintance with God; I fear you would go, one to his Pleasures, another to his Vanity, and another to his Covetousness, and almost all of you neglect this Work of so great Concernment. Let me therefore urge you with all earnestness, that you will not account it a small matter, whether you be acquainted with God or not; and so neglect this Trial of your selves: But bring your hearts up roundly to the Examination, yeild not to their unreasonable withdrawings, force them to answer. If you make any account of the Charge of God, if you make any account of the Excellency of Man, if you would not lose the highest Priviledge of the Creature, If you have any esteem of the Life of Heaven, know your selves in this, whether you are in a State of Acquaintance with God, and be serious and diligent in this Enquiry.

Thirdly, Because men are so exceeding apt to

be mistaken, and to misapprehend concerning themselves, that they are in a state of acquaintance with God, while they are meer strangers unto him ; such as those whom our Saviour speaks of, *Matth. 7. 22. 23. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils; and in thy Name done many wonderfull works?* and then he will profess unto them, *I never knew you; depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* They take it for granted, that because of such privileges, and gifts, & common graces which they had, therefore they were well acquainted with Christ ; but our Saviour answereth, *I never knew you* ; that is, I never had any acquaintance with you. Such are those who are resembled to us by five foolish Virgins, *Matth. 24. 11.* The five foolish Virgins come when the door is shut, and say, *Lord, Lord, open unto us* ; but he answereth, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not* ; That is, never had acquaintance with you : You never knew me in the time of your life, and I will not know you now : You were ashamed to own me before Men, and I will be ashamed to own you before my Father, Men are so apt to be mistaken in judgment of themselves, that they think themselves Rich and increasing with goods, and to have need of nothing, when they are wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And this made David, *Psal. 139. 24.* to cry out after he had been trying himself, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* This unaptness in us to make a right judgment of our selves in our relation to God, ariseth,

First, From that deep Root of self-love that is in us by Nature, whereby we are apt to apprehend well of our selves, and please our selves with a good conceit of our selves, though we are never so bad. And such is the nature of this affection, that it blinds our eyes, and prejudiceth the mind, that it cannot make a right judgment. As affection in some Parents to their Children, makes them reckon that which is a blemish, to be a beauty in their Children; so doth inordinate self-love work in men, in the judgment of themselves. Men when they judge themselves, they look into a flattering glass which presents them in greater beauty than that which is their own.

Secondly, we judge amiss of our selves, because we take not a right Rule for our judgments, as those whom Paul speaks, 2 Corinthians. 10. 12. *Some commend themselves, but they measure themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves are not wise.* If we take our selves to be the Rule and Measure, then we cannot discern our own crookedness and irregularness.

Thirdly, We judge amiss of our selves, because of the deceitfulness of our hearts. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* Jer. 17. 9. *Gross wickedness is apparant to the Pur-blind Eye;* but where there is an abstaining from gross outward Sins, there are special workings of Corruption, such as pride, self-love, distrust of God, and love of the World; any of which shut up the Soul against God, as with Bolts and Bars; and these lying inward are not discerned. Other Accounts may be given of the unaptness to make a due judgment of our selves: It concerns us therefore

to be exact in our tryal, and trust not to a sudden answer ; for we are ready to make a short work of it, and to save our selves the labour, and to sit down with charitable thoughts of our selves. Whatsoever answer therefore our hearts give us, let us see cleared, and have such reason for it, that we may know how to proceed with our selves, upon a right judgment of our selves. The chief work of trial in this particular acquaintance with God, will be from those particulars wherein I opened the nature of the souls acquaintance with God. Let us therefore take those Heads, and our own Experience of our selves, and by a rational deduction let us find out our own estate.

As thus, Those that are acquainted with God are brought nigh to God. Whereas sometimes there was a strangeness and remoteness, a vast separation, now the partition is taken out of the way, and I am made one in Christ. I have took God to be my portion, and my Father ; I have been a Prodigal, and have departed from him ; but I finding my self lost and undone, and that nothing could satisfy my soul in the world, therefore I resolved I would return to my Fathers house, and try if he would receive me again into his Family ; and so I have done. I have cast off my old converse with the world, and with corruption ; I have broken my league with Hell, and have entered into a covenant with the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ ; therefore I may comfortably conclude, that I am now in a state of acquaintance with God.

But if in the enquiry into my self I find not these things, if I find that now I am as in former days ;

days: I have felt no such change in my self, and that all things are with me as they were of old, I never was sensible of any loss in my self; I never knew what strangeness and highness to God meant; I never understood what Union with God, and distance from God, was; this signifies ill, it is a symptome of a bad state; of a state of unacquaintance with God.

2. So again, for our converse with God. He that is acquainted with God, he hath had his converse with God, he hath dwelt with God, and God with him; he hath supped with Christ, and Christ with him; his great business and employment hath been nigh God, in those things wherein is most of God. If I find my soul much conversing with God, oft sending out breathings to Heaven, oft casting my eye towards God, if I find the great work of my mind to be with God, my great business lies in Heaven, my treasure is laid up there, and my thoughts, and desires, and joys, and delights, and meditations are there: I may comfortably conclude that I am in some measure acquainted with God. But if in the inquiry into my self, I find that I have my whole converse with the world, that I can afford no time for Prayer to God in my family, and in secret; if I find all the day long my cares, and desires, and thoughts, run out most naturally, and fully without controule towards the things of the world, or that I will mind my self in a natural carnal way, and mind not the things of God; this signifies to me my unacquaintance with God, and it will be an ungrounded presumption in me to reckon of my self any other then a stranger to him.

3. So for communion and fellowship, which is

is in acquaintance. Those that are intimately acquainted, their communion in the way of discourse is very frequent, in making known their thoughts and apprehensions, their fears and wants; their minds are open one to another, and that which is the propriety of one, is by their acquaintance communicated to the use of both. If then *I* can find in reviewing the workings of my soul, that there hath been this sight of Heaven, this Spiritual Communion between my soul and *God*; that my heart hath been open to *God*; that *I* have gone to *God* when my heart hath been burdened with sorrow, *I* have discharged it into the bosom of *God*, as into the bosom of a friend; that in my doubts *I* have betaken my self to him, expecting comfort from him; that upon hearing his voice *I* have opened to him, and upon my opening he hath come in with smiles of love, and given me tokens of his favour; these things signify a state of acquaintance with *God*; but if *I* know not what it is to have given up my soul to *God*, to be his, and to have taken *God* to be mine, if *I* have had experience of receiving nothing else from *God*, but a partaking of the things of the world: if *I* have not been wont to communicate the workings of my mind to *God*, it betokeneth my unacquaintance with *God*.

4. And again, for that friendly working of love and affection in the soul towards *God*. Those that are in a state of acquaintance are supposed to comply with each other in kindness, and love, and good will, and affection. If then *I* can upon search into my self, find that *God* hath the highest room in my affections, that my heart is his, that his love is prevailing with me, above the

love of all things besides, & that I love those that are his beloved for his sake, then I have in me a sign of regal acquaintance with God; for love is the very quintessence of acquaintance: but if in the search into the workings of my mind I can find no such friendly compliance, but that God was still thwarting and crossing my designs, that I should find my self better content if there were no God, and that those workings of my mind that are about God are sower, harsh, and tearing upon my Spirit; then it is to be feared, that I have no acquaintance with God.

And hast thou made an impartial inquiry into thy state? And how stand things between thy Soul and God? Art thou acquainted with him, or art thou not? Consider seriously O sinners, that this is one of the weightiest questions in the world; and if this question were but well resolved, it would put an end to a thousand other questions. He that can say of God and Christ, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, he need not very solicitously ask what news? He hath heard good news from Heaven, which will easily balance all, come what will come, he need not much pass, as long as there stands that one Text in the Bible, *That all shall work together for good to them that love God.* He hath no cause to go a begging to the world, and to say, *who will shew me any good?* As long as the Lord hath shined upon him with the light of his countenance, He need not complain, what shall I do: I have lost this or that dear friend; when he hath found him, who can make up all with one look whom he can never lose. In a word, he need not ask how shall I do to live? And what

what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithall shall I be cloathed, so long as he knows that he hath a noble friend, who will ease him of all his care, and never see him want? Well then, hast thou answered this great question or not? Or wilt thou do by thy conscience, as *Felix*, put it off, and say, thou wilt hear of these matters, at some more convenient season; and I wonder when that more convenient season will be; And why not now, I pray? What season more fit then the Present? I am sure God saith, *Now is the acceptable time*; and do you know better then he? What hast thou to do that is more necessary? Speak out I pray, is the following of thy pleasures? Is the serving of Satan? Is the damning of thy Soul, more necessary then the saving of it? Is the life and death of a Soul nothing? Are everlasting glory and misery small matters? Is the love or hatred of thy God so inconsiderable a thing? Awake O sinner, what meanest thou? Arise speedily, and look about thee man. Consider seriously as thou valuest thy Soul, what best becomes a sinner in thy condition: What answer shall I return to my Master? Are not these things worth the thinking of? Shall I say for all this, that thou art not at leisure to look after an interest in his favour, or any thing that tends to it? Shall I tell him that thou hast something of greater weight, and higher importance to trouble your head with? And do you in sober sadness think so? For you make account, that excuse is sufficient. I pray then make use of it your self (for I dare not.) When God shall come to ask you, why you did no more vigorously mind

mind the getting acquaintance with himself, tell him then if you think that answer will serve your turn, that you were not at leisure, you had such urgent occasions which took up the whole of your time; such and such a friend you had, who sent for you to the Tavern, and you could not possibly come when he invited you, tell him if you believe that plea will hold water, that you would have been glad to have come upon his invitation, but that you were taken up with such good old friends, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. How do you think such an answer will be taken? You may think to put us off with such kind of reasons as this: but do you hope by this answer to satisfy your Judge? Believe it sin-ner, God will not thus be put off. Wherefore I do again with all the earnestness I can for my soul renew my suit to thee, that thou wouldst act like a man in his wits; make some serious inquiry into the state and condition of thy soul. And consider for the Lords sake again and again, before you send me away thus, what errand I come to you on: It is to treat with you about a rich match for thy poor undone soul: therefore consider well what you do before you make light of this business, and know when you are well offered; believe it, God will not long send after you in this manner, and you are not like every day to have such proffers; Divine Patience and Goodness will not always plead at this rate with you; God will ere long say, let them alone: the Lord will ere long speak to scornful sinners in such language that will make their ears to tingle; he will despise and slight as well as they; and who is like to have the worst of it at last, I leave

I leave to any rational man to judge? The time is coming, when your ungodly hearts shall ake, to see him whom you shall have had for your husband; when you shall have him for your Judge, whom you might have had for your Advocate. And though we could not get you to be willing to be acquainted with him, no, not so much as to have any serious thoughts about it, or to make any enquiry after him to inform your self concerning him; yet you shall have him for your enemy whether you will or no. But O let us not part thus! let me, a man like thy self, reason the case a little more with thee; come tell me poor ignorant creature, thou that still standest demurring, and sayst, Shall I, shall I? what evil is there in thy God, that thou shouldest be thus hardly brought, so much as to discourse this business with thy own soul? What is the reason that thou scarce thinkest it worth the while to trouble thy head about any thing that doth concern your interest in his love? Thou that mindest his love so little, tell me what dost thou think had become of thee long before this, if God had regarded thee as little as thou dost him? What wouldest thou have done, had the Lord said to any Disease, the least of his Messengers, fetch that Rebel before me, that values not my favour; he shall know what my anger is, seeing he will not prize my love? O what a lamentable case hadst thou been in, had God but done by thee as thou hast by him? *Acquaintance with God!* methinks sinful man should stand and wonder at such a word; methinks he should be even surpris'd with an extasie of admiration; and say, and will God indeed be acquainted with such

such a Worm, such a dead Dog, such a Rebel as I? *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou shouldest make such an offer to him?* One would think thou shouldst no more dispute the matter then *Ester* did, when that Great Monarch made her his Queen. Were it but in sensible things, that nothing near such an offer were made (which is impossible) man would think the very questioning in such a case a strange Folly. One would think that every one of Gods Enemies that have been in open Rebellion against him, and are utterly unable to make their part good against him, when they hear of such Terms of Mercy from their Prince, who hath all their lives in their hand, should rejoyce at this News, and say, *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring such Tidings?* How did *Benhadad* look, when instead of a Halter he had a Coach? When instead of Rebel he heard Brother? Whatever we may think of these things, *David* thought it high time for him to bid such a Messenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving his God; Hear what he saith to his own heart and others, *Psal. 24. Lift up your heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* And because the door of mens hearts is lock'd, and barr'd, and bolted, and men are in a deep sleep, & will not hear the knocking that is at the Gate, though it be loud, though it be a King: Therefore *David* knocks again, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting Doors:* Why, what haste, saith the sinner? What hast? Why, here's the King at your Gates; and that not an ordinary King neither, he is a glorious King that will honour you

so far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to
 take up his abode in your House, to dwell with
 you ; but the Soul for all this doth not yet open,
 but stands still questioning, as if it were an En-
 emy, rather then a friend that stood there, and ask,
 who is the *King of Glory* ? Who ? He answers a-
 gain, *It is the Lord of Hosts* ; He, that if you will
 not open quickly and thankfully to, can easily pull
 your House down about your Ears ; He is the
 Lord of Hosts, that King who hath a mighty Ar-
 my always at his command, who stands ready for
 their Commission, and then you should soon know
 who it is you might have had for your Friend ;
Lift up therefore your Heads, O ye Gates ; Open
 quickly, ye that had rather have God for your
 Friend then for your Enemy. Oh why should not
 the Soul of every Sinner cry out, Lord, the Door
 is locked, and thou hast the Key : I have been try-
 ing what I can do, but the Wards are so rusty that
 I cannot possibly turn the Key : But Lord throw
 the Door off the Hinges, any thing in the world,
 so thou wilt but come in and dwell here : Come,
 O mighty God, break through Doors of Iron,
 and Bars of Brass, and make way for thy self by
 thy Love and Power. Come Lord and make
 thy self Welcome, all that I have is at thy ser-
 vice : O fit my Soul to entertain thee ! But where
 is the Sinner that is in this Note ? How seldome
 do poor Creatures desire Gods Company, or be-
 wail his absence ? Where almost are the men
 and women to be found, that do in good ear-
 nest long to be Acquainted with God ? Men are
 naturall'y strangers to God, and it is a wonderful
 difficult thing to perswade men to enter into so
 much as a serious deliberate Consideration of
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these things. Though it be so infinitely for their interest; though the God that made them, out of pity to their souls desire it, though he send his Embassadors in His Name to beseech them to be reconciled unto God, against whom they have been in open Arms, though in infinite mercy he perswade them to lay down their Weapons, and promise them Free and General Pardon, and to receive them into Favour, and to forget and forgive; yet where is the Sinner almost to be found that with any thankfulness doth close with these tenders? Now it being a business of such infinite concernment, and it being the very work and business of a Minister of Christ to bring God and man into Union, to get man acquainted with God, I shall in the next place labour to inforce this Exhortation upon the hearts of sinners, and do what I can possible to prevail with them that are as yet strangers, to get acquainted with God, that they may have peace, and that thereby good might come unto them.

EXHORTATION.

Once more, poor sinners, That God which can in a moment stop thy breath, and send thee into Hell, doth offer to be friends with thee. If thou wilt come upon his invitation, well and good, thou art a happy man for ever; if not, thou wilt rue the day that ever thou wert born: yet, through mercy the matter is not gone so far, but that thou mayest (if you will now at last in good earnest humble thy self to him) be received into Favour. Behold, a Pardon, Mercy, and Grace, stand astonished, O ye Heavens, at this infinite con-

condescension, Wonder O ye Angels ; and pry into this kindness. Was there ever such condescension, love, and goodness heard of ? If thou didst but understand, O stupid sinner, what an offer is made to thee, thou couldest not but adore that goodness that can pardon and forget such offences, and receive such a Creature into Favour ; thou wouldest also cry out with as great admiration as he did ; *what manner of love !* you would think it a mercy not to be parallell'd, a kindness never to be forgotten, a proposal by no means to be refused. Now that I may, if possible, prevail with some that are yet afar off, to come near, I shall enforce this Exhortation with many powerful Motives, the least of which (were men but well in their Wits as to Spiritual matters, were the world not to a Wonder Fools, in the great affairs of their Souls and Eternity) might easily prevail. O that I might prevail ! O that some might be perswaded ! O that God would put Life and Power into these Words, that they might prove effectual to the intended ends ! O that some poor Rebellious sinners might be made to close with the most advantageous Offers that ever were, or could be made to Creatures in our condition !

MOTIVES.

The first *Head* of *Motives* that I shall insist upon to inforce this *Exhortation*, shall be taken from the Nature of the Person that I would have you acquainted with. Consider well what kind of Friend you are like to have of him ; and if, after you have well weighed what I shall (with Gods leave)

leave) say, you can find out any one in Heaven or in Earth that will be a better Friend to you, and stand you in more stead; if in all the World you bring one that deserves better at your hands, and is more worthy of your choicest Love, and Acquaintance, if I bid you to your Loss, Why then let me bare the Name of a Cheater for Ever. And if after Tryal, through trial, and intimate Acquaintance, you find your self deceived, and that it was not worth the while to give your self so much trouble, why then let me be Branded to Eternity, for the veryest Lye and Impostor in the World. For my part, I envy not men their happiness, but I wish with all my heart, that men would do that which may be most for their interest. It was the Counsel of *Epictetus*, none of the weakest men, though a Heathen, *Make choice of that which is really most Excellent; and if there be a Friend to be found better then thy God, the first thing thou dost, get an Interest in him.* But consider whether there be not a contradiction in the Terms, *Better then the best*; it's perfect Nonsense. I know it's impossible for any one that hath right apprehensions of God to undervalue him. Wherefore it is a grand piece of Religion, to have clear apprehensions of God; such can't but believe him to be infinitely Lovely, Wise, and Powerful, and to be obeyed in all things; and all the reason in the world to acquiesce in his Will, who is so Good and so Wise; such will place Happiness in nothing below his Favour. Wherefore I think *Plutarch* was not mistaken, who affirmed, *That mans life was given him of God, only to get the knowledge of God.* But I shall be a little more particular in speaking to the excellent qualifications of him

him, whom I would fain get every poor sinner acquainted with.

First, He is the most loving and kind friend. Poor ignorant Creatures that are strangers to him, they talkt at a mad rate concerning him: those that know him not, will be speaking bad, and thinking worse of him; but, O did they but know what God is to them that are acquainted with him; had they but conversed with him themselves, did they but see what entertainment he gives, had they but been in his company, and experienced what some have experienced; had they but beheld how affectionately he imbraces them which come to him, they would quickly say that it was a false report, and wicked scandal, that the Devil and the World, which know not God, had raised of him; they would soon cry out, that they would not for a world but that they had been at his house, and that they have cause to bless God for the day that ever they knew such and such who brought them acquainted with such a friend; they will never while they live, for the future, believe any thing that is spoken against God or Christ, let who will speak it. Is this the God they had such hard thoughts of? Is this the kindness that they did so slight? Is this the friend that they were so loath to come to? And thus an ingenious soul will even be ashamed that it should ever harbour such low thoughts of him, whom now to their comfort they have found beyond apprehension kind. Believe it Sirs, you can't conceive what a friend you shall have of God, would you but be persuaded to enter into Covenant with him, to be his, wholly his; I tell you many, that

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sometimes think, and do as you do now, that is, set light by Christ and hate God, and saw no loveliness in him, are now quite of another mind, they would not for ten thousand worlds quit their interest in him. O who dare say that he is a hard Master? Who that knows him, will say he is an unkind friend? O what do poor creatures ail that they do entertain such harsh, sower thoughts of God? What, do you think there is nothing in that Scripture, *Psal. 31. 19.* *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* Doth the *Psalmist* speak too largely? Doth he say more then he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in *ve. s. 21.* that he blesteth God these were things he could speak to, from his own personal experience, and many thousands as well as he, to whom the Lord hath shewed his marvellous kindness; and therefore doth very passionately plead with the people of God to love him, and more highly to express their sense of his goodness, that the world might be encouraged also to have good thoughts of him. What Nation under Heaven can say they have not tasted of his goodness, *Psal. 33. 5.* *All the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* Read over the hundred forty fifth *Psalme*, and let us hear then what you have to say against God. Some indeed may speak of the might of Gods terrible acts; some that have despised his love, have felt his power and justice; as for these we cannot think them competent Judges, in this case; they will not it may be, commend Gods goodness: yet even they cannot, will not condemn God of injustice, but exclaim against themselves for their unspeakable folly in flight-
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ing his kindness when it was tendered to them? But as for others, ask them, and they will declare the goodness of *God*, they will abundantly utter the Memory of his great goodness, and sing of his righteousness. Do but try poor sinner, do but try, come a little nearer, and believe your own experience; and if after a thorow knowledge of *God*, and a real acquaintance with him, you can say that his favour is not to be sought after, his love not worth the desiring; why then *I* have done, *I* have no more to say. *I* am sure if *God* were, as the Devil and the world represent him to be; in so many thousands of years, among so many thousands and millions that have been acquainted with him, and entertained by him, some of them would have complained before this, we should at one time or other have heard something against him. Now *I* challenge all the world to produce me but an experienced solid Saint, that when he acted like himself, and after he had been in the company of *God*, and had been feasted by him, could say that he kept a short house; especially could we but enquire of those that sit down at his table, and are always in his presence; which of them all have a word to say against him? but of that more hereafter. No, no, it is in sinners themselves, there lies the fault; they believe the malicious father of lyes, they easily credit the unexperienced ignorant world: and how little reason you have to believe so malicious enemies before the Word of Truth, I leave your selves to determine. O why will you take up a slander against your Creator so easily? Why will you receive such great things wherein your eternal welfare is concerned

concerned upon trust? Do but search diligently, turn over the Bible, consult the experiences of wisemen, and see whether things be not as I tell you. And how doth the matter stand now, poor heart? what must the Devil be believ'd before God? what is God a hard Master still? of all the Creatures in the world, some of you have little reason to say so. Hast thou not been fed, cloathed, and delivered a thousand times by him? Who is it that provided so richly for you? Who filled your barns? Who restored your health at such and such a time, when the Doctor gave you over? Was that one of his unkindnesses? Are these the things for which you flight him? God himself makes a challenge in Jer. 25. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and become vain? neither said they, where is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, and led us through the wilderness, through a land of desert and pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, where no man dwelt: and I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodness thereof, and yet you know not me, saith the Lord.* Was there ever such ingratitude heard of? *Passye over the Isles of Chittim. and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing: hath a nation changed their God? but my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* And what sayst thou, O ungratefull Israel? have the Heathens more reason to cleave to their Idols? Are the Pagans more beholding to their stocks and stones than thou art to the living God? And now what hast thou got by all this? hast thou increased thy riches? Are thy barns more full of Corn? Are there ever
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the more Cattel in thy Pastures ? Are thy Presses more full of Grapes ? Art thou not now grown poor ? Is not the Heaven become as Brass, and the Earth as Iron ? Do not thy Cattel groan for want of food ? Are not thy Vines and Fields grown Barren ? Why, you may thank yourselves for all this ; you did not know when you were well. Return therefore, O back-sliding *Israel*, and thou shalt know the difference between my service, and the service of Devils, *Jer. 2. 30, 31.* Let me therefore again plead with thee, O God-despising sinner. If for all this thou wilt not be perswaded, let me expostulate the case with thee, as God did with *Israel*. Did not God bring thee into a world every way furnished for thy use ? Hath he not subjected the Creatures of the world to thee ? Who waters thy Fields out of his treasures ? Who opens the clods of the Earth, and sends thee out of his store-house provisions year by year ? What would quickly become of thee, if thou hadst not a fresh supply from him every year, nay, every Moment ? O, is this his unkindness for which thou hatest him ? And is it for this that thou hast such sower thoughts of him ? And if all this were too little, he would do greater things than these ; hath he not sent his Son out of his bosom ? Doth he not offer thee Heaven and Glory ? What canst thou in reason ask, that is good for thee, that he would deny thee, if thou wouldst but be acquainted with him ? And if this be an unkind friend, I do not know who is kind : if this be not love, I know not what is. What could he have done more to express his love to the world than he hath done ? *Isa. 44.* Ask *David* what he thinks of God,

he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his house, and by his good will would he never out of his more immediate presence, and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiss in him? That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon Record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God, *Psal. 16. 6. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Why, what is that you boast of so much. O David? have not others had Kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing, a Crown is one of the least Jewels in my Cabinet, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.* So in *Psal. 23.* quite through. Nay, doth he not sometimes come out and beckon to the poor beggarly starved world, to come and eat their fill of the same dish; *O taste and see that the Lord is good,* *Psal. 34. 8.* If you will give any credit to his word, he will tell you, *No friend like to God,* *Psal. 73. 25, 26, 27, 28.* *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I can desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, For, lo, they that are far from him shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee, but it is good for me to draw near to God.* Let others think, or do as they please, as for him he values the light of Gods countenance above corn & wine, & oyl, *Psal. 4. 6, 7. 1 Joh. 3. 1. Cant. 14.* And what sayst thou now poor creature? Art thou still of the same mind? Wilt thou have God for thy God and Friend, or no? Is he good and kind or not? Is his favour worth the desiring and seeking after? *Psal. 94. 8. Understand O ye brutish among the People, and ye fools when will you be wise:*

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If *God* himself may not be believ'd, if *David* his servant may not be credited, hear what one of your brethren, a Heathen I mean, saith in this case I shall translate his words into English; they are as follows : *The goodness and providence of God to man is so great, that if he were well in his wits, he would do nothing publickly or privately, but praise God, and speak well of his name.* Ar. Epic. l. i. ca. 16. Doth it not become man, while he is plowing, and digging, and eating, &c. to be singing, *Great is that God that hath given us land to till, instruments to work with ; great is that God who hath given us hands and feet, and other members ; above all, that he hath given us an understanding soul ?* And seeing most men are blind in these things, is it not fit that some that are more wise and able, should publickly praise *God* for all these things ? and now I am a lame old man, but partaker of Reason, *God* is to be praised by me ; this is my work, and this I will do, and I will not leave this station as long as I live ; and I wish that all the world would joyn with me in singing a Song of thankfulness to this good *God*. Hear what a testimony he gives of the goodness of *God* ; Hark how he invites you to joyn in that sweet consort of singing praises to your Maker : hark at what a rate he talks, that never read a Bible, or heard of a Christ, or knew what this acquaintance with *God* that I am speaking of meant ; how bravely doth he set out the goodness of *God* ? What say you, will you yet be perswaded to think well of *God* ? Methinks I am loath to see my good Master thus slighted and undervalued , Methinks it grieves me to see thee too, so foolishly to refuse such an offer. I shall conclude what I have to say upon this

this head, with another notable expression of the same divine and God admiring *Stoick, Idem. c. 6.* *If men will study the nature of things, and had but grateful minds, they might see cause sufficient to praise God from every creature in the world.* It is not therefore because God hath no goodness or beauty in him, that men do no more earnestly desire acquaintance with him; but because their eyes are shut, or they look upon him through a wrong prospective. This is the first qualification of this Friend, which may commend his acquaintance to you, that he is the most loving and good Friend.

— *Secondly,* He is a most comfortable Friend. It is a Vulgar, and yet a dangerous error, which the Devil would fain keep up the credit of, That a Religious life is a sad, melancholy, pensive life; and that upon our acquaintance with God, we must bid an everlasting farewell to joy, pleasure, and comforts. And is it true, that a Christians life is so uncomfortable a life? What then doth *David* mean to take his Harp so oft in his hand? What makes him so frequently to warble out those melodious Notes? How seldom is his Viol out of tune? Why is he so oft singing and rejoycing? Read the last *Psalms* at your leisure, and then tell me whether that be the language of a sad mournful Melancholy man? Do you never hear him speak of God his exceeding joy; Doth he not tell God plainly sometimes, that he can scarce relish any thing but that which comes from his Table? Nothing else can comfort him. Hence it is in *Psal. 119, 76, 77.* that he puts up this earnest request to God; *Let I pray thee thy merciful kindness be for my comfort.*

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As for his part he could take comfort in nothing below that, and that was it that the Lord had graciously promised to feed his servant with, as long as he lived; whereupon he urges God with his promise, *According to thy word unto thy servant.* And that none might think this to be only Gods common kindness that he means, he adds, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live.* Gods common mercies would not serve his turn, that was a Dish that the World fed upon as well as he? if he might not have these sweet dainties peculiar, spiritual, fatherly mercies, he could not live, he should even pine away for hunger. Wherefore he saith a little after, *That his soul did even faint for Gods salvation.* And the soul that hath had a full meal here; O how is it raised? How doth it cry roast-meat, *Cant. 4. 1. The King hath brought me into his chambers;* and what had you there? nay, that's more than the soul can express; only this she can say, *The taste of that mercy, she hopes to keep in her mouth for ever; she shall remember his love more than wine.* Nay, so comfortable a Friend is God, that those who have an interest in him can rejoyce in such times, when others would be weeping and wringing their hands. Gods company is so refreshing, that it turns a prison into a palace; it brings joy and pleasure into a dungeon. Stand forth O ye suffering Saints, and speak your experiences? the world objects your state to us a sad state, and they think you have good reason to accuse God, and if any have any thing to say against the comfortableness of a Religious life, and this friend, it is you. Well then, will you promise, O sinners, to stand to the Judgement of the greatest sufferers.

sufferers. We will enquire of them that have been sawn asunder, tormented, roasted for Gods sake; look into that little *Book of Martyrs*, and you shall find as uncomfortable as their state was, yet they would not accept of deliverance; none of them all that would open his mouth against this Friend for all this. What say you, O *Paul* and *Silas*, now your backs are raw, and your feet are in the stocks? their singing speaks significantly enough for them that they were not over-sad; and they are so busie in crying *Hallelujahs*, that they can't attend to give an answer to so sorry a question. What say the *Martyrs* out of the Flames? Doth not their love burn as hot then as ever? Did ever any of them from *Abel* to the least that suffered in Christs cause, say that *God* was an uncomfortable Friend? Do not all the children of *Wisdom*, from first to last justify *Wisdom*, and say, *That all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, peace?* Of those that have *God* for their Friend and know it, bring me any of them all that complains of *God*. How doth he come and chear them up when all the world is against them? *Joh. 16. 33.* What made that Holy Man in *Psal. 23.* say. *That though he should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he would fear no evil?* What, not fear then? Why, what Friend is it that keeps up your spirits? that bears you company in that black and dismal Region; he will soon tell you *God* was with him, and in those slippery ways he lean'd upon his staff, and these were the Cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the Gallants in the world out of all their Merry Jovial Clubs, to find such a company of merry chearful

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Creatures as the friends of *God* are. 'Tis not the company of *God*, but the want of it that makes sad. Alas, you know not what their comforts be, and strangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they can't be merry when their countenance is so grave, but they are sure you can't be truly merry when you smile with a curle upon your souls. They know that he spoke that sentence who could not be mistaken, *Prov. 14. 13.* *Even in Laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that Mirth is heaviness.* Then call your Roaring, and your Singing, and Laughter, Mirth; but the Spirit of *God* calls it madness, *Eccl. 2. 2.* When a carnal mans heart is ready to die within him, and with *Nabal* to become like a stone; how chearfully then can those look that have *God* for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can out-face Death, look joyfully into Eternity? Which of them can hug a Faggot, embrace the Flames? This the Saint, can do, and more too; for he can look infinite Justice in the face with a chearful heart, he can hear of Hell with joy and thankfulness, he can think of the day of Judgement with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry Companies, one that can do all this; come muster up all your jovial Blades together; call for your Harps and Viols, add what you will to make the consort compleat; bring in your richest Wines; come lay your heads together, and study what may still add to your comfort; well, is it done? Now come away sinner, this night thy soul must appear before *God*. Well now, what say you man? What, doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry Com-

Companions, and let them hear thy heart. Now call for a Cup, a Whore, never be daunted man ; shall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatnings of the Almighty *God*? what so boon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth ! Here's a sudden change indeed. Where's thy merry companions, I say again ? all fled ! Where are thy darling pleasures ? have all forsaken thee ? Why shouldst thou be dejected, there's a poor man in rags that's smiling ? What, art thou quite bereft of all comfort ? What's the matter man ? What's the matter ? There's a question with all my heart, to ask a man that must appear before a *God* to morrow morning. Well then, it seems your heart misgives you, what then did you mean to talk of joy and pleasures ? are they all come to this ? Why, there stands one that now hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold ; and the very thoughts of Eternity, which do so daunt your soul, raise his ; and would you know the reason ? he knows he is going to his friend, nay his friend bears him company thorow that dirty Lane. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for *God* and the soul to dwell together in unity ! This 'tis to have *God* for a friend. *O blessed is the soul that is in such a case ; yea, blessed is the soul whose God is the Lord*, Psal. 144. 15. Psal. 69. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 3. Joh. 14. 16. Isa. 51. 11. 12. Neh. 8. 10. Psal. 30. 5. Psal. 44. 4. Prov. 14. 10. Isa. 29. 19. Rom. 14. 17. 1. Pet. 1. 8. Nay, *David* when he seem'd to be somewhat out of tune, leaves this upon Record as an undoubted truth, Psal. 73. 1. *That God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart ; Let the Devil and*

his Instruments say what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have said it before, and I see no reason to reverse my sentence; Truly God is good. Though sometimes he may hide his face for a while, yet he doth that in faithfulness, and love; there is kindness in his very scourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to *Israel*: do but mark it first or last, *The true Israelite in whom there is no guile, shall be refreshed by this Saviour.* The *Israelite* that wrestles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Fathers blessing, he shall have it with a witness; *He shall reap in joy, though he may at present sow in tears.* Even to such as are of a clean heart. The false-hearted hypocrite indeed that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reserves his heart and love for sin and the world, that hath much of complement, but nothing of affection and reality; why, let such a one never expect, while in such a state, to taste those reviving comforts that I have been treating of: while he drives such a trade, he must not expect much of Gods company; but of that hereafter. What a charge doth God give to his Ministers to keep up the spirits of his people. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith their God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* It's a gross mistake, to think that God loves to see his drooping and hanging down their heads; No, No, he counts it his honour to have his servants chearful. O why then should any of the precious sons and daughters of *Zion* walk up and down, as if their friends company were not sufficient to solace them, even in the lowest state that a child of God

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God can be conceived to be in. While you think *God* is honoured by you, you can't imagine what wrong you do him. The world stands by and looks upon you, the Devil bids them look on still, and ask them, how they like such a dumpish life, and the service of such a Master, all whole servants and friends lead such a doleful life. Stay, hold there Satan, that's a lye, and a loud one too; there are and have been thousands of *Gods* Children that have lived, as it were in the Suburbs of Heaven, while they have been upon Earth; many thousands there have been, that have spent their days in true solid joy and peace; many that have gone from one Heaven of comfort here, to another of glory and comfort in that other world. As I said before, so I say again, It is not the company of *God*, but the want of it, makes those sad which you see so; besides, let me tell you, tears and joy are no way inconsistent. It may be also those tears, that sad countenance may be for thy sake; when he sees what comfort thou despisest, and knows what a *God*, what a Friend thou refuseth, he can't but weep; it's no Rarity for the people of *God* in the midst of their spiritual enjoyments to pity poor foolish sinners; that slight those things which they know to be so refreshing: Thus *David* did when his heart was solaced with the love of *God*, when his soul was ready to be over-burdened, over-powered with the abundant in-comes of *Gods* kindness, he can't but with grief and pity think of their state, who have nothing to live upon but husks, whilest he feeds thus high. O let my soul be but acquainted with *God*, let me but taste more of those true comforts, drink of that
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river of pleasures that is at his right hand, and then I could spare these lower sensual pleasures, then I should scarce envy the most merry ranting Blades their comforts ; I will not say but then I should with sorrow think of their wants. It was spoken by *Galeacius Caraxiola*, one that sometimes had none of the least shares of worldly enjoyments, and might have had more, could he have dispensed with the absence of his friend, could he but have been willing to have wanted those spiritual comforts. *Let him perish that values not one hours communion with God, and the comforts of a Divine life, above all the pleasures and comforts that the earth can afford.* Give me such comforts, such a friend, whose smiles may refresh me upon a death-bed, whose presence may revive me when nothing else can. *Naturalists* tell us of a Bird call'd *Charadrius* that being brought into the room where any one lieth sick, if he look upon the sick person with a fixed eye, he recovereth ; but if he turn away his eyes the person dies. It is true, I am sure, of this friend, in whose favour is life, and in whose frowns there is death, [*Ar. Epic. l. 3. cap. 24.*] *Can you help me to such a friend* (may all say with as good reason as he) *that can keep me from all fears.* O for such a friend ! This is instead of all pleasures to me, to think that God is my Father, and to know that I have loved and obeyed him to the utmost of my power, not only in words but in deeds ; this, this is the pleasure, here's a friend indeed. Now what do you say to all this, *is God to be desired ? Is his acquaintance to be sought after ? Can such a friend be too much valued ? The truth of it is, I would not give a rush for any of your comforts which come*
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not from a sense of our interest in Christ, and which have not a solid foundation, Scripture-consolations. It is not he that smiles, but he that can look up to God as his, and look into his soul, and see things there in a good composure, and kept in a chearfull subjection to his Maker and Redeemer; this, this is the state, here dwells joys, and comforts that deserve such a name. This lower Region sometimes is stormy, but above there is a constant calm. *Sen.* And is God still to be slighted? are his favours, is his acquaintance little worth? I know you can't be an enemy to comfort and joys; why, let me tell you here's the Well of Consolation, here's the Fountain, and all other joys which are drawn out of the Cisterns will ere long be dry. Come away therefore, poor soul, and do not refuse such joys as all the carnal world can't parallel for their benefits. And this is the next *Motive*, taken from the consideration of the Nature of this Friend, which I would persuade you to get acquainted with.

First, He is a loving and kind Friend.

Secondly, He is the most chearing, comforting Friend.

Thirdly, He is the most able and powerful Friend. He hath all power in his hand; and as long as he is but thy Friend, who ere is thy Foe, thou shalt never be over-powred, never be crushed. Thou mayst challenge all the Devils in Hell, and all his instruments upon earth to do their worst, God is on thy side, thou needest not fear. Thou art in thy self a poor weak Creature, easily conquered and broken by a thousand enemies; but if thou hast a God to fly to, thou mayest
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sing as well as those did, Isa. 26. 1. *Thou hast a strong City, salvation will God appoint for Walls. and Bulwarks.* No wonder then if every wise man think it abundantly worth his while to secure this great Privilege to himself that God may be his friend; This is his best hold, his *One thing necessary*, verse 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of God all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.

Sin, the World, and the devil, may tempt a sinner, but they can never guard him from the power of this Great and Almighty God.

And now, you that are contented to live as without God in the world, let me request you to consider :

Canst thou spread out the Heavens as a Curtain, or cover the Sun with Darknes? Canst thou call to the Lightnings, and will they answer thee, and say, Here we are? Shouldst thou speak to that hasty Champion, and command him to stand still one Quarter of an Hour, would he obey thee? If these things be too much, why dost thou boast, that art but a Worm? Alas, poor sinner, when this great God appears in judgment, thou art not able to deal with a Fly or a Frog.

O then, Is it not good prudence for all the sons of men, to come and agree quickly with this Adversary while he is in the way, for *whoever* goes on in an Enmity and Rebellion against this Lord of Heaven and Earth, shall not prosper, but be sure his sin shall find him out.

And this is another qualification of this Friend which I would commend to your acquaintance, he is an able Friend. G First,

First, he is the most kind and loving Friend.

Secondly, he is the most comfortable Friend.

Thirdly, he is the most able and powerful Friend.

Fourthly, he is the most active Friend: He commands his to be diligent and industrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord, surely he will not be slow.

If the inanimate creature, such as the Sun, resolveth as a strong man to run his Race; how active then must the maker of that Sun be; if he command you not to deal with a slack hand, surely he himself will not deal with a slack hand; should you behold this Friend of yours riding upon the wings of the Wind, and making the clouds his Chariot, would you not say, O how swift, O how active is this glorious Friend of mine! The feet of this beloved One are as Hinds feet, for the good of his Friends. Yea, *his very eyes run to and fro through the whole world*; for their good he keeps constant watch and ward about them, and he that can injure any of his out of his sight shall go unpunished, *Esa. 27. 3.*

The Lord speaks this under the Metaphor of a *Vine-Yard*, and doth this great Husbandman neglect his *Vine-Yard*? doth he not Dig, Manure and stone it, and keep out the *wild Boar*, and *Foxes*? Doth he not prune it, and tender it charily? I the Lord do keep it night and day, none shall come into it to gather the Fruit of it without my leave. I will water it every moment: So that you see what pains God takes for his. Do you believe, this Friend sits in Heaven, and looks down upon the Earth for nothing? Be not deceived, O sinner, that wilt not be persuaded to get

get reconciliation with this Great and Holy Majesty. *The Lord is not slack concerning his coming, as some account slackness*: Let his stay be never so long, when he comes to judge the world, it will be before the sinner looks for him. Indeed there is nothing that a *wicked man* more pleaseth himself with, than the thoughts that it will be a long time before *God*, and he meet, but he little considers that *a Thousand years are but as One day* compared to the days of Eternity. Now, by faith, these things are made real to the considerate Christian; and as for the supplying of his wants, he knows if he comes at midnight to borrow bread of him, he will not put you off with this excuse, that he is a-bed and cannot rise from his Children, but will presently help, making their necessity his own opportunity to give them what shall be convenient for them; as knowing, that let the wind sit in what corner it will, it shall fit their Sails, and bring them nearer the Harbour.

The Worlds Friends, are infinitely below this Friend; One hath chosen Silver and Gold, and a great Estate, and such a one in the worlds Kalender may be writ down for one of the wisest in his Choice: Well, let us see now what this Friend can do for you, your body is on the Rack, your hands are weak, your legs tremble, your stomach fails, your sleep departs from you; where is now your friend? Call for him speedily, come let us now see if he be a friend indeed, let us see it, can he give you one hours sleep, can he help you to one moments rest, can he give you no refreshment, no help? Take him, lay him by you on your Bed. *O its so heavy I cannot endure it: Lay it in*

your Bosome ; O, I cannot breath for it ; take it away, take it away, it will not do : Why Sir, do you know what you say ? It is your old Friend, which you valued above God himself ; it is a bag of Gold : I know it, I know it, it presses me down ; it is so heavy I cannot bear it ; away with it, away with it : And is this the Friend you prized so very highly ? Is this all the kindness that he hath for you now ? Is this all the help he can give you at such a time, when a Friend should stand one in some stead ? Were you not told as much long ago, how you should be served at last !

Fifthly, He is the most Humble and Condescending Friend ; he doth not scorn to be acquainted with the Meanest ; The Beggar may be as well-come to Him, as the Prince : The Poor and Rich are all one to Him ; He takes as much notice of *Job* on the Dunghill, as *David* on the Throne : He knows any of his Friends in Raggs, as well as in Silks ; in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins, as well as in Scarlet and fine Linnen.

Look up poor Creature, and see what a Privilege thou hast ; God Himself, the King of Glory, is willing to be acquainted with thee : What sayest thou to this ? Doth not thy Heart leap within thee for joy, when you consider the infinite Goodness of God, that Reveals these things to Babes, which are hid from the Wise and Prudent : Even so Father, for it hath seemed good in thy Eyes. That's a strong Expression ; yet he spoke it that cannot Lye : Therefore, O you Humble Ones, that value the Favour of this Friend, Hear and Read it, and make the Best of it : It's Yours ; feed upon it : It's a
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sweet bit indeed, *Isa. 66. 1, 2. Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my Foot-stool; where is the house that ye will build me, and where is the place of my Rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* I shall have occasion hereafter, a little to open these words under another *Head*, wherefore I shall now but name it. O what encouragement sheweth for the most despicable Creature in the world, that may be as happy in the acquaintance with God, as the mightiest Lord in the World. Here's one that will not be ashamed to own thee, when others will take little notice of thee. Thou thinkst these things strange, it may be, and so they be indeed, but yet not more strange then true. It doth not a little engage the affections of the meanest Rank, if a person of quality do but give them a kind look; especially if they may have freedom of access to Him. O what a privilege they count it; but such a one to undertake the whole managing of a poor mans affairs, for him to come to his House, and to look into his Cupboard, and to take care of supplying all his Wants, and coming frequently to him, and supping with him; and be with him, and to make great provision for him as if he were a Prince; where is such a thing as this heard of? But if such a thing were, it were a light matter in comparison of what I am speaking? Where do we ever Read of a great Kings sending Embassador after Embassador to a poor Beggar? What History doth Record such a Story as this, that a great Monarch should make earnest sute for many

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years together to a worthless slave, that he can hang when he will, that hath not a rag to her back, to make her his Queen ; this is rare indeed, this is beyond president among men ; but yet it is that which the great God doth not disdain to do ; Nay let me tell thee whosoever thou art remaining in a state of Nature, that readest these lines, that at this very time God is doing no less then all this comes to for thee ; and I in the name of my great Master do come to expostulate the case with thee ; that God that gave thee thy breath, and can take it away as soon as he pleaseth ; that God that made Heaven and Earth, to whom all the Nations of the Earth are but as the drop of a bucket to the vast Ocean, who holdest the Sea in the hollow of his hands, that weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a ballance : that God that hath no less than a Heaven to reward with, and a Hell and everlasting Flames to punish with, he it is, that doth by me beseech thee to be reconciled unto him, he it is that would be your Friend, your Acquaintance. O unheard of mercy ! O infinite and unparallel'd condescension ! I have oft thought there are two great astonishing wonders in the world, The one is Gods infinite mercy and condescension to rebellious apostatized man ; and the other is mans insensibility and ingratitude ; that there needs such a stir, and so many words to perswade him to close with this wonder of kindness, and that so very few should be prevailed with. See this set forth to the life in Ezek. 16. Isa. 1. 2, 3. Psal. 11. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the Heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth him-*

himself to behold the things that are in Heaven, and the things that are in the Earth: He raiseth up the poor out of the Dust, and lifteth the needy out of the Dung-hil, that he might sit with Princes, &c. The Psalmist therefore had no small reason to cry out with admiration. Psal. 8. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou vifitest him? What is man that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* Psal. 144. 3. Job. 17. 17. 18. *What is man that thou shouldst magnifie him, and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him, and that thou shouldest visit him every Morning, and try him every moment?* Behold his Majesty, and yet how he stoops? Nahum 1. 4. Psal. 18. Job 37. 38. and 39. Chapters, Isa. 40. Psal. 138. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: But the proud he knows afar off.* That which (Seneca, Epist. 17.) the Moralist speaks of Wisdom may be said of God, Epist. 61. *It is lawful to come to him without rich attire and great attendance, come naked and you shall be as kindly entertained, as if you did shine in cloth of Gold, and were besparkled with Diamonds. He will not give freer access to the rich than the poor, neither doth he value a strong healthful person, before a sick and crazy one, a beautiful and well-trim'd Gallant, before a cankered, old, deformed Creature.* Thus far Seneca and the Scripture speaks of the Language. Neither Jobs Boils, nor Lazarus's sores made God keep ever the further off from them. I knew one all of a cleave with the small Pox, whom this friend came to visit, and in that condition, how many kisses had that sweet Creature from God? O it would do ones heart good to have such a friend! And this

is the next qualification of this friend, which may commend him to thy acquaintance, be thou never so poor, never so vile and sinful in thy own eyes ; such as thy self he hath made welcome ; and upon his Word, wilt thou but come away speedily, thou shalt be welcome too.

Sixthly, He is the most Faithful friend. Where is the man that can tax him of the least unfaithfulness ? which is the man that can say that he ever forsook any of his in their greatest exigency ? he hath been trusted more than once with more than the world is worth a thousand times over ; and they which trusted him most, never accuseth, never thought their choicest Jewels, their whole estate could be left in safer hands ; his promise, and his performance have kept touch, he never failed his in the least punctilio, or circumstance of time. Ask *Abraham*, who was one of Gods friends, God tells him that his seed shall inherit *Canaan*, and that they shall be strangers in a Land, that was not theirs four hundred years ; and did he not at the expiring of that time, though it was at midnight almost, bring them out of *Egypt* : God keeps his time with them to a minute. Ask *Joshua* whether he did not live to see this promise made good ? inquire of *David*, and he will tell you again, that no friend is so trusty. The unfaithfulness is on mans side, there indeed, there I say is many an unhandsome thing done, and yet for all God doth not (as you shall hear hereafter) presently break with them ; if they forget that they are Children, he will not forget that he is their Father ; if God should have done thus by them, many thousands of them that are now in Glory had been somewhere else. He promiseth indeed
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great things unto his Friend ; but do's he not do as he saith, if not in the very thing, yet in that which is better ; and who would account himself wronged, if one that promised him ten pound in Silver, should in stead of it give him ten thousand Pound in Gold and Jewels ; I believe such a one would not be thought to be worse then his word, nor the person to whom he made this promise, count himself injured. And this God doth frequently, did men but understand the worth of what Gods pay them with. It may be God doth not cloath them in Silks and Sattins, (neither do I know that he ever promised to do so) but yet he Cloaths them with the Righteousness of Christ, and bestowes those Glorious Robes upon them, in which they look more Trim and Neat than in Cloaths of Gold ; he hath made him such a Sute that is the handsomer for the much wearing ; he may Eat and Drink, Sleep and Work in it, and keep it on his Back Day and Night, and it shall not be wrinkled ; it is the better for use : He is a faithful Friend, and none that ever had to do with Him, can say any thing to the contrary ; He never forgot any Business that any of his Friends desired him to do for them, he never neglected it, or did it by the halves ! where did any of them come to him to reveal some secret loathsome distemper to him, that he reproached them with it ? To which of them did he promise a Heaven, and put them off, with this World : When this Pilot undertakes to Steer their Course, there their Vessel shall never split upon the Rock, run upon the Sands, or spring a Leak, so as to sink in the Seas ; to be sure He will see them safe in their Harbour. *Ar. Epist. l. c. 16.* He was no Christian, yet I suppose none will

deny but he spake good Divinity; who said, *If a Man will choose God for his Friend, he shall travel securely through a Wilderneß that hath many Beasts of prey in it, he shall pass safely through this World; for he only is safe that hath God for his guide.* Doth he not speak a little like David himself, *Psal. 37. 26.* Who never expected to come to Glory, except he were guided by his Council! Now, if a poor Heathen could say thus, and see good reason to trust God, and admire his Faithfulness as he doth frequently; and so doth *Seneca*, justifying Gods Faithfulness in all his dealings, with the best men in all their Sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked; what then shall the heavenly Christian say, who hath experienced so much of Gods Faithfulness in answering his Prayers, in fulfilling his promises, and supplying all his exigencies. *David* will tell you as much, and justify God in his most severe dispensations towards him: *In very Faithfulness hast thou afflicted me, Psal. 119. 75.* In our earthly and bodily affairs, we should never count that Physitian faithful that will rather open a vein, or put his Patient to exquisite torture to save his Life, then let him die easily. We believe a Father may whip his stubborn Child with more love than let him alone. To prevent the Ax or Halter with a Rod, is no cruelty. Faithful are the wounds of a Friend, *Prov 2. 6, 7.* Is was not for nothing that the Psalmist sticks so close to God, he had a little experience of the unfaithfulness of other friends, *Psal. 38. 9; 11.* *His Lovers and his Friends stood aloof from his sores, and his Kinsman stood afar off.* May not a great many complain as well as *Job*, *That their Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of Brooks they pass away,*

away, *Job. 6. 15.* A friend may forget one, a brother may disown one; Father and Mother may cast one off, but here's a Friend that sticks closer than all. Nay, he is a better Friend to his than they are to themselves, when they love themselves so little as to undo themselves, he loved them so well as to save them; when they loved themselves, so as to Poison themselves; he loved them, so as to give them a powerful Antidote; when they like Children would have the Knife, he takes it out of their hands lest they should cut their Fingers; when they are so careless as to surfeit themselves, he is so faithful as to keep them short, and diet them; and all this I hope they that understand themselves will not call unkindness or infidelity. *David* had in his time some Friends that made no bones of hazarding their lives for him; some of them were willing to quench his Thirst though with their Bloud, and yet for all that in all his life he never met with so faithful a Friend as his God, *Psal. 89. 8. O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* He had rather trust his God than any of them all. God is a real true faithful Friend: he tells us things as they be; he doth not speak of more things than the nature of them doth require; he doth not tell the best, and hide the worst; he doth not speak all of Heaven, and nothing of suffering, but saith plainly, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, they must suffer persecution; And Christ saith, Those that will be his Disciples, must take up their Cross and follow him, and that through many Tribulations, they must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; He speaks of sowing in Tears, as well as reaping in joy; of affliction

flition as well as Glory. And when he speaks of
 the Glory of another world, he doth not too
 highly advance his Excellency. When he speaks
 of his Wrath, or Hell, or Sin he doth not make
 them greater evils than they be. The Lord is
 faithful in all his dealings, and that they which
 love him, know right well. Whatsoever doth
 happen to the world doth happen justly and
 faithfully; and so if thou wilt but well observe,
 thou shalt find. And what sayest thou after all
 this, thou who hast tryed many and many a
 friend, so called, and hast by sad experience first
 or last found them all unfaithful, and art almost
 ready to say of all men, that they are Lyars, and
 that truth and reality are rarities; thou thinkest
 there is scarce a man upon the Earth to be trusted?
 And wilt thou never be afraid of such a friend?
 wilt thou at last be wise, and be acquainted with
 a friend that never proved unfaithful? Behold
 such a one that would be glad with all his heart
 to entertain you, would you but forsake your
 old treacherous Acquaintance. Here, here's one
 that never fails, nor forsakes those that put their
 trust in him. The Heavens shall depart, & the Hills
 be removed out of their places, but his faithful-
 ness, his love shall never depart from his; and
 wilt thou not think such a friend after all this
 worth the having? Come, come, never stand
 fretting thy heart out with discontents, men will
 be men, that is, unfaithful as long as the world
 lasts. Do you expect as long as sin reigns in mens
 souls, that as long as Satan doth so much act
 therein, that they should forget to be selfish, co-
 vetous, deceitful? but now God will always be
 like himself a God, faithful, true, holy, just; and if
 any

any one in Heaven, or in Earth can condemn God justly, of the least unfaithfulness, my mouth shall soon be stopped. In this thing I confess my self to be of *Antoninus* his mind, who said, *That if there be a God as there is most certainly, why that God must necessarily be most faithful, most wise, most good; but if there be no God, it is not worth the while to live in a world, in which there is nothing but sin, confusion, disorder, and no hopes of a redress; the excellence of our being, our Reason, would make our misery more exquisite, and our lives less desirable.* But blessed be God it is not come to that pass, that we should need question the being of a God; for as one saith wisely, *Thou hast far more reason to question thy own being then Gods.* Now I say again, methinks he that hath been so oft perplexed with many unfaithful, unworthy carriages from them which he called friends, should be at last persuaded to try what this one friend would do for him. O what abundance of sorrow would it prevent, if men would but trust God more, and men less. This, this is the friend, sick and well, rich and poor, living and dying, always the same. Make sure of this Friend, and thou art safe; thy All is then in safe and faithful hands:

Seventhly, He is a rich Friend, the earth is the Lords, and the Fulness thereof; cattel upon a thousand hills is his. He it is that hath the absolute disposal of Crowns and Scepters, he it is that can easily raise all his Favourites to a high estate; if the world and all its glory can do his any good, if Kingdoms and vast Dominions can advantage them, he can with better reason then he did to Christ, say, *All this is mine, and if thou wilt love me and worship me, I will give you as much of it*

it as will do thee good; and who would account it a kindness to be given that which will do one hurt? but these are but Toys and Trifles in comparison of what God hath to bestow upon his Friends. Lift up thine eyes, and behold those glittering Stars; look upon that stately Canopy that hangs over thy Head; why, all this is nothing almost to the Glory which shall be revealed; there is a far greater disproportion between what we see and enjoy at the best here below, than there is between the Foot-stool and the Crown. O could you but by Faith draw the Curtain and see what is within; O did you but know what's behind those Hangings which you see wrote so curiously, the Work of his fingers! O that, that's the Place, there's a House indeed, there's a Palace, couldst thou but by Faith and Meditation take a view of it; could you but make a Voyage into that far Country, and see that City of God, and Discourse with the Inhabitants of the *New Jerusalem*; what Discoveries should you then have of the Riches, State, and Grandeur of that Princes Court; shouldst thou but see those Treasuries opened, and know the worth of Gods Jewels, thou wouldst wonder what Men and Women meant, that they should need so much persuading to be Acquainted with him that had such things to bestow; you would judge him worse than mad, who should not joyfully embrace any Overtures of this Nature; in a word, they would reckon that person besotted that should not with all possible Gratitude, close with such kind of proposals. Come along therefore with me, poor soul, thou that art not worth a Groat, and hast never a Friend that can or will give you any thing to speak
of

of, come along with me, and take a short prospect of the Territories of this mighty Monarch, let's get up to Mount *Pisgah*, and make a Survey of that goodly Land, let's take a turn or two in the Courts of his Palace; consider well the pleatantness of this Seat, how rarely it is Accomodated, the Richness of the Furniture, the Nobleness of the Inhabitants, the Sweetness of that Harmony that sounds Night and Day in that Temple, the unconceivable Costliness, Riches, Glory, and Excellency of every thing. Do but look a little about thee, are not thine Eyes even dazelled at the sight? Do you see what Building that is, whose Walls are Jasper, and the City is all of pure Gold, like unto clear Glass, and the Foundation of the Walls of that City are Garnished with all manner of precious Stones, *Rev. 21. &c.* And what think you now, where is the Prince upon Earth that ever was master of such an Estate? What are his Attendants? the meanest of those that stand in his Presence, is no less than a King; the least of his Servants is more Rich and Glorious than the Mightiest Potantate that ever trode upon earthly Mold, that was a stranger to God. This God doth not grudge to give that which is more worth than a thousand Kingdoms to his Darlings. I might tell also at what a rate they live, who are fed always at his Table, and what dainty Dishes they Feed upon, I might speak of their Clothing and Robes, all which speak the Riches of that Lord which maintains his servants so highly. But what am I doing, *Can I Graspe the Heavens in my Arms? or take up the Sea in the hollow of my Hands? Can I measure the Heaven of Heavens, or weigh the Mountains in Scales, or the hills in a ballance? Could I do all* and

and a thousand times more, yet could not give you Account of the Estate of him who would be your Friend, your Husband : at the best, I can but give you a superficial gross Relation of it, and when I have said all that I can speak of, and all the men in the world with all their Tongues have spoke what they can too, nay, let Angels with their Heavenly Rhetorick do what they can to set out the Glory of his Kingdom; I say, when all this is done, you must remember all falls short of what it is, and that since the beginning of the World, men have not heard, neither can it enter into the Heart of Man, to conceive what a God is Worth, what a Friend you may have of Him, if you will but speedily be Acquainted with Him. His Kingdom hath no Bounds, and his Dominions Reach further than both the *Indies*. The small Love-tokens that he sends now and then to his Beloved into a far Countrey, are of infinitely more Value than all the Locketts of Diamonds and Richest Pearles and Jewels in the World; *Prov. 8*. Behold how merrily *Rebeccah* looks upon a sorry Jewel or two presented by *Eliezer* from his Master, how soon is her Heart Conquered? and why should we not be more taken with things of far greater Worth? What! is all this as much as nothing with you! Methinks your hearts should be all on a Fire; Methinks you should quickly say, O that I could but see Him! Who will bring me Acquainted with him, he shall have my heart, my dearest Love? Methinks, should I ask you the same question that they did *Rebeccah*, Wilt thou go along with me to such a Friend? You should readily, without any further dispute say, yea, with all my Heart, and think long to be up and going

going. Why then do you talk of a year, a month longer? O what ail poor Creatures to make us stand waiting so long for an answer? Do you ever expect a better offer? Do you look to advance your selves somewhere else? Can you hope for a better, a richer match? Go then and search out among all thy Lovers which make suit to thee, which of them can feed thee with such costly viands, which of them can cloath you in such Royal Apparel? Which of them can make you such a Joynture? Consider wisely and speedily, that I may turn to the right hand or the left. What, saith thou, canst thou amongst them all, better thy self? Is there any one like him? Is there any of the Sons of the mighty comparable to him? Are any of the Kings, or great ones of the Earth able to make you such an offer; or should they, can any of them make it good? What, have you yet resolved upon the point or not? What it is you stand for, I pray, do you question the Truth of what I speak? Do you make account I speak of the highest, and make the best of things? Why, then let me tell you further, I have not, I cannot tell you the half of what you will find to be true, if you would come to be thoroughly resolved, or of what you will believe hereafter, to your sorrow, if you still refuse him. And I must further add to what I said before, that whatever riches God possesses, he will Joynture you in, as soon as you shall in good earnest be willing to accept him for your Friend; all that I can speak of, and more too, you may call your own. Ask, and it shall be given, without prescribing how much more than you can ask or think shall be given you. Your Lord and husband

husband is not so niggardly as *Ahashuerus*, who said, *What is thy request, and what is thy Petition, Queen Esther, and it shall be given thee, to the half of my Kingdom?*† But God saith, what is thy request, and what is thy petition, poor soul, and it shall be granted to the whole of my Kingdom; what is it thou wantest, what attendants dost thou lack to wait upon thee to my Court? are they Prophets, Apostles, Ministers, Angels, they shall be given, *1 Cor. 3. 21.* Do but try him; he bids you ask, and you shall have: Let me give you this one *Memento*, Ask like one that hath to do with a rich King, who hates to do any thing below himself; remember it is he that delights to give like a God; widen therefore thy desires as large as Heaven, be bold and speak a great word, and I warrant thee thou shalt not be denied; tell God, that seeing in his infinite goodness and condescension, he hath been pleased to give thee leave to ask without restraint, thou dost humbly request his Son for thy Lord and Husband, himself for thy Father, God, and Friend, his Kingdom for thy Dowry, the Righteousness of his Son for thy Ornament, Cloathing, and Beauty, the comforts of his Spirit, and abundance of his grace to bear thy charges handsomly, till thou comest to his house. This is high indeed! but thy great and noble Lord loves dearly to hear such covetous Petitioners, who will be put off with nothing but such great things. When do any of these go sad from his Court? When do any of the seed of *Jacob* seek his face in vain? This, this is the generation of thriving ones, who seek for life, immortality and glory; who seek thy face, O God of *Jacob*. And now what do you say,
will

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will you believe all this? Dare you take my word? I am persuaded none of you all think I dare tell you a lye, and do you any wrong; but for all that I do not desire you should take my word, nor the word of any man living in a thing that concerns Eternity; but take his word who cannot lye, *Psal. 8. 18. Riches and Honour are with me; yea durable Riches and Righteousness,* vers. 19 *My fruit is better than Gold; yea, than fine Gold; and my Revenue then choice Silver.* The wise man tells us, *That wealth makes many friends,* Prov. 19. 4. *And that many will intreat the favour of the Prince; and that every one is a Friend to him that gives Gifts.* If this might be in Spirituals, I should not fear, but that I should prevail with all my hearers to seek the friendship of God; if their real interest did weigh with them, if true riches and wealth could win their affections, if the most substantial good things might signify any thing, if solid reasons might byass them, I should not fear going away without them. But alas, alas, how little power have all these things with the sensual world? What are men and women turn'd to? What sots and bruits are they in the concerns of their souls, and the affairs of that other world? Men run up and down hunting after good things, and have taken a false seat, they hope to catch that at last which they will feed upon, and satisfy themselves with. I tell thee, O man who askest, who will shew us any good? Here here it is; riches thou meanest: well then, let it be so; and if I do not prove that what I offer thee from my great Master, to be a thousand times more worth thy seeking than Gold or Silver, and better Coin than that which bore *Cæsars* stamp

stamp upon it, then say you were cheated. Thou tellest over thy moneys very fast methinks, but are you sure all that is Gold which doth so glister? Is all that currant Silver? Will it go in another Country? Is it not possible, but that you may be mistaken. Here, here is the Gold that is tried, it will go any where; here is one that will give you, will you but desire earnestly his Acquaintance, such Treasure that will not perish, such Silver that hath not Tin, such Gold which hath no Dross, such true Riches that can't be taken away from you. Ask that Saint which looks so merrily, that lives so bravely, how he got his Estate, and how he came to be so Rich all of a sudden; he will soon tell you how, and where his Treasure lies, and yet not fear being Robbed. He hath of late been Acquainted with a Friend that hath given him that which makes him esteem himself more worth then if he were possessed of ten times more then ever *Alexander* or *Cesar* was. A Friend of *Cyrus* in *Xenophon* being asked where his Treasure was, which made him to think so highly of himself? His answer was, *Where Cyrus his Friend was*. A Christian may with much better reason and chearfulness, if asked, where his Riches and Estate lies, answer, *Where God his Friend is*. Ask the poorest of them that are Acquainted with God, the weakest of all his Children, what they will sell their Portion for, and what you shall give them for to resign up all their interest in God; to quit their claim to this Inheritance: Would they not all be of *Pauls* mind, and even scorn the motion, and count the glory of a thousand worlds, but as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the know-

knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, *Phil. 3. 8.* Nay, hear what one says that was far less acquainted with God then any of them which I have been speaking of, when he talks of such a kind of bargain as this. (*Epiet.*) *Offer me a Kingdom, and you Offer me to my loss.* For, saith the same Author in another place, *A good man may look up to Heaven, as the seat of his Friend, and not fear want.* Inquire of *David* what portion God gave him? and he will soon answer you. A goodly portion indeed; and that he gave him no less then himself, and that the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he hath a goodly heritage, *Psal. 16.* And therefore he counts himself richer then if he had all his Enemies in chains, and their Royalties at his disposal; he takes himself to be a far happier man then if he were absolute Monarch of the Universe, and were to give Laws to the inferiour World; he reckons himself now as well to pass and better too then *Adam*, when he was sole Landlord of the World. It was true spoken of somebody, I do well remember who. *He that hath rich Friends, must not look upon himself as poor.* O then that you would be indeed friends to your selves, and have respect to your own real interests! And what, will not this mighty and powerful Argument, which weighs as much as a thousand others, prevail? And do you still say; what profit will there be in serving the Lord, and what advantage shall I get if I be acquainted with him? To what account will it return? I again answer, To a very good account every way. Try but this trade with the wise Merchant, & you shall soon feel the benefit of it. (*Bolton*) *Conceive to thy self mountains of Gold and rocks of Diamonds;*

monds, and to this a vast unmeasurable tract of ground, land of inheritance, the most fertile soil in the world, bringing in such a burden every year that shall trouble the owner to reap it, imagine his Pasture as great as his Arable, and all cloathed with thousands of Cattel small and great, and none of them barren neither; suppose his Barns and Store-houses could never be emptied, and his Presses should burst out every year with new Wine. Again, let the Merchant store his Cellars with the most pure Oyl, and furnish him with such rich Spices as the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon; suppose he were provided with all the exquisite Rarities that the Air, Sea, or Earth can afford, yet for all this he were a beggar, in comparison of one that hath God for his Friend: Such a one possesseth him that possesseth all things. Well then, be perswaded at last to be wise. I remember the Moralist (*Sen. Epist. 6.*) brings in one acting like a wise man, and a good proficient in Philosophy, who begins to be a friend to himself. And this is that which I am pleading with you for. If I came to rob you of all hopes of happiness, and to give away all that you have or expect, and to turn Mendicants; if I come to perswade you to espouse a beggarly interest, and to match your self so as that you should be sure to be undone, I should not wonder, if after I had spoke much, I should prevail but little. But when it is such a Cause that I am pleading, when it is for your own unspeakable advantage, when it is riches, true riches that I would have you look after, an estate that I would have you mind, which may be had for the looking after, have I not cause to admire what need a man should have to use so many words? Had you money to spare, and could I tell you of a brave purchase

chafe that you might have an excellent penny-worth, I am perswaded I should not be very unwelcome. Could I tell you of a vast Estate that you might have, upon the matter, for accepting or looking after, I believe I need not spend ten years in earnest begging and intreating you to look after such a thing. Should I offer to bring you to the place and person of whom you might buy it, should I not soon have your company? should not your necessaries be quickly made ready for such a journey? would you not be up betimes in the morning? nay, would you not travel all night, and think it no folly nor madness, both to lose some rest, and to take some pains, so you might but come to possess what I speak of. Nay, were there but a possibility of obtaining of it, at least a probability, I perswade my self you would not fail to look after it the very first thing you did. I am ready to think you would neither spare for pains or costs, so that after all you might but make sure of enjoying it. Why, what then is the matter that I can do no more in the business that I am about? I am sure I bring you tidings of a better bargain, a braver purchase, and surer inheritance, and what need I then spend so much time in arguing with you? Good Lord! what mean people? Are they out of their wits, and quite beside themselves? What, is a Feather better then a Crown, Brass then Gold? Is a Glass to be preferred before a Diamond, finite Enjoyments before everlasting Riches, Darknes before Light, the World before God? O how is man sunk below himself? What, hath sin made men and women? If this be not folly and madness, what is? Such may go for wise men in the worlds account

account that makes such choices ; and it's possible a man in *Bedlam* may say, his neighbour that tore all his hair off from his head, is well in his wits. O that this were not the condition of the far grater part of the world. And what meanest thou, O my soul, that thou art no more affected to see such vast multitudes of brain-sick frantick sinners, that make light of the tender of the Gospel, that take them for their enemies, who would do their utmost to make them happy for ever. I must profess I am even ashamed of my own heart, that I do not ming'e my words with tears ; that I should speak for God and souls, with so indifferent a spirit ! Well, now you have heard of a great Match by which you may be made for ever ; are you for a'l this of the same mind you were : Well then, complain not if you be a beggar. Remember how you were offered, remember you might have been worth more than a world. O that inconsiderate souls did but know ; and indeed know what an offer this is ! O that they would not carelessly undervalue such a proposal ! O what shall I do ? How shall I persuade you ? What Arguments will prevail ? O thou great and mighty God, give men and women but a spiritual understanding of these things, make them deeply apprehensive of their excellency and reality, and then I should soon have them with thankfulness complying with these tenders which thou commandest me to make unto them. O when shall it once be ! How long shall the Devil, and an unbelieving heart undo so many Millions ? How long shall Satan triumph over souls, and cheat them thus miserably of their All ? O pity, pity dear Lord, the

the besotted foolish world, and give me more compassion to souls, that I may with incomparably greater earnestness and tenderness plead thy cause with them, and resolve to give them no rest, till I have perswaded some of them in good earnest, to look after the great and weighty affairs of Eternity, and the making sure of their Friend.

Eighthly, He is a sympathizing Friend. It goes to his heart (with Reverence be it spoken) when any injuries are done to any of his; when his friends are wronged, it touches him to the quick: He is tender of them, as of the apple of his eye. Again, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Never was tender-hearted Mother more pitiful over her only Child, then God is to them which love him, never was any friend so much concerned for another as God for his. What else mean those high expressions of pity in *Isa. 63. 6.* *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* It was not once or twice that God did so by them; but in all their afflictions, he was afflicted; which was not expressed in some cold formal words, such as these: Alas poor creatures, they are quite undone, their enemies are very barbarous, but he shew'd it in that most real demonstration; by saving of them by the Angel of his presence. A verbal kindness costs little, and helps little. But suppose his friends are carried Captive, are they not quite out of the reach of his help? No, his love, pity and power, will find them out in any place under Heaven; and if they be slaves, he will redeem them, though he gives

Kingdoms and Nations for their Ransom. In his love and in his pitty he redeemed them ; and when by hard usage they are grown so weak and feeble, that they can scarce go nor creep, why, he will carry them in his arms, and bare them. And thus he did of old ; and his affections are rather greater than lesser now, than they were then. The mother can be weary of carrying a dirty screaming child ; she thinks it less trouble to whip him, or to let him lie till he hath cry'd himself weary ; she is loath to lug such a troublesome thing up and down all the day long. But yet such is the tenderness of this Father, that he carries his all the day long, though they be so heavy, so unquiet, so dirty. But of that presently. How oft do you read of strange pity in the book of the Judges ; when they had by their own folly more then once brought themselves into calamity, how do his bowels yern over them ; and when any of his are groaning under any tryalls or temptation, what sending and running is there ? how many Cordials are prepared for them ? what calling to this servant and that servant to attend them with all the care that may be, and to comfort them in this state ? and in case of abuse, how doth he shew his love to them ? If you should ask *Pharaoh*, he would tell you, that Gods Friends are edge-tools : why else doth the Lord lay about him with so much indignation, when they are oppressed. Nay, for their sakes he rebukes Kings, saying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm* ; if they do, be it on their peril. How did he bear the afflictions of his people *Israel* in *Egypt* ? did he stand still as if he were unconcerned ? did he shut his eyes and not see ? or did he stop

his ears to their crys? No, no, he sees, he sees the sufferings of his in *Egypt*, and that both enemies and friends too shall know, the one to their comfort, and the other to their cost, *Exod. 3. 7* How doth he awaken for their help, and gird on his sword upon his thigh, and march out with fury? how doth he cloath himself with vengeance, as with a robe, and brandish his Glittering sword, and sheath it in the hearts of his and their enemies? Wherefore is it that God hath so many controversies with *Edom*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*? Why doth he Muster up his forces with violence against *Babylon*? Whose quarrel doth he engage in? What was the ground of that War? If you read over all the indictments that are before this great Judge, you will find this a common one, their hatred of his people; and this to be sure he will not put up. And that which puts an Accent upon all this, is the unworthy carriage of most of them towards him all this while. But of that under the next *Head*. which is this.

Ninthly. He is the most patient Friend: Never any one in the world could have digested such affronts, born such indignities, as God hath many a time, and even from the best of those that he takes into this intimacy with himself. Had it not been for this Covenant of Friendship, *Judah* and *Ephraim* too had been soon unpeopled; as for them they soon forgot their Covenant, yet for all that God remembers his; though *Ephraim* forget to be a Child, yet God can't forget to be a Father. Read that Text and wonder, *Hos. 11. 7. 8.* And my People are bent so back-sliding: though they called them to the most high, yet none at all would exalt him. Though they had many compassionate

Prophets that called after them day and night, when they saw them turning their backs upon God, yet they were not minded. Who now would conceive that God should ever think a thought of kindness towards them more? yet hear what God saith, *How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, O Israel? how shall I make thee as Adam? and how shall I seal thee as Zebulon? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger. I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man; the holy One in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the City.* Well, now tell me if ever there were such a compassionate, meek, patient Friend. *Ephraim* was up in open Arms against his maker; he did rebel most unworthily against his good Lord and Friend, to whom he was bound by infinite Engagements. *Ephraim* had quite cast off God, and he will have nothing to do with him; and *Judah* is not far inferiour to his treacherous Brother; and what will God do? One would think, as I said before, he should ease himself quickly of such false Friends; one would think that after such unfaithfulness, he should for ever banish them his Court; one would soon conceive that he should think of dis-inheriting such rebellious Children; for theirs was not the first, second, nor third time that they had served God thus; who then could imagine that he should ever trouble himself with them any more? Should one not look every day when he should quite cast them off? Why, God seems sometimes to threaten as much, and seems ever and anon to Act towards them, as if he would never

never look upon them more while the world stands. Go, saith God, to your Idols, let them save you; what do you come to me for? you have refused to have me for your God; go cry to your gods, and let them deliver you. Thus he seems to turn away his face; yea, for all that, see how soon he forgets his displeasure; Ephraim is his Child, his dear Child, and he can't but pity him; and how shall I give the up, O Ephraim, &c. How hardly is God brought so much as to chastise his Children; he never corrects them, but when there is an absolute need of it: ask the Church under the rod, and she can't but say as much, *Lam. 3. 32, 33* *For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men.* He calls judgment his work, his strange work: and when he doth correct his stubborn Children, how doth he many times give them a lash and a kiss, a frown, and a smile? O what would have become of the holiest men living, if God should upon every provocation have broke with them. If God should mark iniquities, O who should stand? Which of the fallen Sons of Adam hath not abused his high Kindness? and yet for all that, how is his Patience and goodness exercised towards them; well might the Psalmist make that the burden of one of his songs, *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works towards the children of men;* and that of another, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* What created being could have born the thousandeth part of that from any hand that God doth every day from his dearest children? What peevishness, and unfriendly quarrelling,

relling, what murmuring and repining, doth he bear, even from them for whom he hath done such great things? How strangely do they carry themselves! how seldom and complemental in their visits of him! how cold and formal in their addresses to him! how frequently are they conversing with his basest enemies! How much treachery and underhand dealing doth he find in them! yet for all this, how great are his kindnesses, and how open are his arms, upon their acknowledgement, to receive them again! Little do we think what unkindness the Lord over-looks; and indeed except we knew what it was to be infinite in holiness, could we any way conceive how infinite his Patience is, *Psal. 106. 43. 44. Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquities. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembered for them his Covenant, &c.* Here, here's Patience, here's love and goodness with a witness! What Prince under Heaven would trust a Rebel, that hath been in arms a hundred times against him, and that at the best doth serve him with so little delight? What friend would continue his familiarity and kindness there, where he hath found abundance of falseness? and who but thou O God, is so mercifull and gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth? As for the trouble that any of his meet with, most commonly they may thank themselves for it; and it's always sent them in kindness: there is none of them all but may say, this is my iniquity, this is the fruit of my back-sliding, this I have got by my estrangement from God.

Tenthly.

Tenthly, He is an honourable friend, and to be acquainted with him is the highest honour in the world. This word, honour, sounds great in the ears of this proud world; what running and catching to get a little of it? How do many undervalue their lives, and make nothing to hazard their blood for a little of that men call Honour; some prize it above riches and wealth, and care not almost at what rate they purchase it; and yet in the mean while they are furthest from that which they so greedily desire, and they run away from that which they seem to pursue. Poor ignorant man is fearfully mistaken, he calls that his honour which degrades him, and takes that for his glory which is his shame: How is he pleased with that which when he hath, he neither sees nor feels, and scarce knows what it is! (*Epiſt.*) What is it, O man, that thou loſeſt thy ſleep for? what is it that thou art at ſo much charge to buy? that rather then you will want it, Eſtate, Blood, Life and Soul, and all muſt go for it? Knight, Lord, Earl, &c. Worſhipful Right-worſhipful, Honourable, Excellent, Graciuſ, are big words, and make a great noiſe; but is this the true honour? will theſe words without the thing do a man ſo much good? a man, I ſaid, and ſo doth God ſay too, and death will make the biggeſt of them all know as much ere it be long; for all thoſe big words: what if his breath ſinks that ſpeaks theſe words, and his that hears them be not much ſweeter. (*Antoniſ*) Is it ſuch an honour to have a company of fools to call him wiſe that it may be is like themſelves? is it worth a Soul, to have it ſaid when I am in Hell, there lived a brave Gentleman, that kept a Noble

Noble house, and brave Table, his Cellar was always open, one might come when one would, and drink as long as one could stand, and never hear, why do you so? and be always welcome; that is, in plain English, where a man might be encouraged to damn his soul. There lived a Noble gallant Person who bid defiance to the Almighty, that had courage enough to go to hell merrily, that had a desire to carry as many along with him as might be; damning, swearing, cursing was their Language; eating, drinking, sleeping, whoring and persecuting the people of God their business. And are these your honourable Persons? Nay, Go higher, to bustle up and down in Cloth of Gold with a vast retinue; to have men on this side, and that side, bowing and cringing; and is this such a business? Is it worth the while to keep such a stir about that which a wise man may want, and a fool have? (*Anton.*) Will those Names, that Grandeur and state, those high Titles, render you more acceptable to God? will they procure you a freer access into the presence of that great King? will those great words scare death? will he say when he comes to your house, this is a person of quality, I must not be so bold as to come near him? will your honour procure you a Protection from the arrests of this Serjeant? Where is the Honourable personage, the Gentleman, Knight, Lord, King, or Monarch, that hath lived a thousand years: (*Lucian*) Are the worms afraid to gnaw thy heart? Will thy flesh never putrify? Will your Servants, or your Master either honour you in Hell? And is this all that you keep so much a stir for, that can do you no good in the grave, or in another world? Can that

that be better worth then Heaven, then God? O that we might but know what it is, that great thing is, which is preferred before Christ and everlasting glory? Again I ask what is it that the Grandees of the world do so much idolize? Is it to be called Wise, Great, and Noble? But what if the wise God call such a one a fool? (*Epiſt.*) What if he know neither himself, nor his God, nor his interest? Hath he much greater reason to boast then a feather that some body will say it is heavy; or dung, that the Swine saith it is sweet, (*Juven.*) What profit is it for a man to be made great for betraying his Country, and flattering a Tyrant, who Yesterday was the son of a Stage-Player, and to morrow shall be shorter by the head? What good will it be to a beggar that is ready to be starved, to be told that he is a Prince, a brave fellow, worth some thousands by the year? But would you know which is the ready way to true honour? I tell you, it consists not in the favour of them that must die like themselves, and before that few years be over, must stand but upon even ground with the meanest; it consists not in the sorry acclamations of them which measure a mans worth by his estate, and their dependance upon him; it consists not in the praise of them whose commendations some wise men have counted a discredit. But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is truly honourable, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, *Micah.* 6. 8. To bear relation to God as a Father, and to carry themselves as his Children, to be a Servant, and Friend of God; this, this is honourable, truly honourable; this is the height, the top of the Creature preferment. To converse

converse with, and delight in his Maker. To love, admire, and rejoyce in God, and to love God, to take complacency in the soul; this is something indeed, this is honour, a wise man would not grutch to venture his Estate, his Blood, his All for this: And how few of the Gallants of the world understand the nature of this honour? How do most of them account that which is the only true badge of Nobility, a term of disgrace; and that which speaks a person highly honourable, and to have brave blood running in his veins, to be low, sordid, and much beneath them; as if it were below a Creature to serve his Maker, and a pitiful preferment to be advanced to glory. O that men of parts and learning, that persons of Quality should be so mistaken! O what's become of their Reason? Is it an honour, a preferment for a man to become a brute? We are ready to pity mad-men, and to laugh at fools; but whether there be not more reason to bemoan the condition of most of the honourable persons in the world, I leave Christ and Christians to judge. Well then, will you be informed after all this by him, who hath all preferments and honours in his gift; I mean the great King, and he will tell you, that Glory and honour are in his presence, *1 Chron. 16. 27.* Mans only honour and true dignity lies in his nearness, and acquaintance with God. A practical knowledge of his Maker is the Creatures greatest preferment. *David* was of the mind, that it was none of the lowest honours to be Gods servant, *Psal. 84.* It is upon the account of *Israels* near Relation to God that *Moses* reckons them the happiest, the most honourable people in

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in the world. Because God had avouched them to be his peculiar people, therefore they might well be said to be high above all the Nations which God had made, in praise, in name, and in honour; *Deut. 26. 18, 19.* And upon this account might a wise man have his choice, whether he will wear a Crown, and be a stranger to God, or Rags, and be one of his nearest servants; he will not stand long before he determine the case, he will soon answer with him, *That he had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, then dwell in tabernacles of wickedness.* If mens actions may speak their Judgments, most of the Gallants of the world are of a far different opinion. But, O let me dwell for ever in his house, and stand always in his presence; happy are they that see his face, happy are they that behold his beauty. This, this mans Crown, this is his highest honour and dignity, for God to be mindful of man, and for his Maker to visit him; this sets him but little below the Angels, this Crowns him with glory and Honour, *Psal. 8. 45.* This is that which puts a true personal worth upon any one, and therefore the *Psalmist* thinks those the excellent persons, in whom is his delight. Upon this account the Scripture saith, *The righteous man, who is in covenant with God, is more excellent than his neighbour.* The pur-blind World, they judge altogether by the outward garb; they see the face, the rich apparel; they see the estate, but they see not their inward excellency and beauty that may be under but mean habit: they are ready to despise the Noble Worthies of the World, such as can look upon Kingdoms as small things in comparison of what they have an interest in,
Who

Who can call God Father, and Christ Brother. Have you never heard of a King in mean apparel, of a Prince without his Robes upon his back, or his Crown upon his head? and will you say that therefore he was but a common person? But those heavenly Creatures that have a more spiritual refined sense, that understands something of things and Persons, are quite of another mind, they can look upon great ones in the midst of their gallantry, without a friend in Heaven, as mean persons that have no interest to speak of; and many of them, for all their greatness, to be in a far worse condition then Dogs and Toads. They can also look upon a poor despised Saint, a contemned Christian, though as to a carnal eye; he should look as if he could scarce speak sense, to be a favourite of Heaven, a person of quality; such a one as this he values as the Son of a King, a Citizen of *Zion*, one of the Royal Race, one of that glorious Retinue, that stand always in the presence of God to serve him, the least of which are Kings and Priests to their great Lord, *Rev. 1. 6. By faith he sees their Crown, and looks upon that Royal Diadem, which shall ere long be put upon their princely heads.* This was the great preferment they sought, this was the honour they most desired; as for the world and all its glory, they can well spare it for those that shall never be advanced to any higher dignity, to any better preferment. As for the Saint, as contemptible as he looks, he hath higher designs, nobler things, greater honours in his eye; and if that which the world so admires were the highest glory that a Rational creature were capable of, the top of mans preferment, why then he could look upon brutes them.

themselves as his equals, except in this, that their Pleasures are more certain, and their Miseries less understood.

It is storied of *Constantine* and *Valentinian* two Roman Emperours, that they subscribed themselves *Vassellos Christi*, the vassels of Christ; and that *Numa Pompilius* esteemed it a higher honour to be a *Friend of God*, than a *Lord of Men*. Consider poor sinner, consider what honours you slight, what preferments you refuse, what dignity you undervalue, when you make light of acquaintance with God. Had that brave Stoick, *Epictetus* I mean, known God in Christ, he would much more have wondered at the inconsiderateness of them which make nothing of being related to God as a Father; he would much more have pittied them which cleave to their lower, meaner kindred, beast, who had rather be like Swine than God, and rather be companions to their servants than their Maker. Seems it to you but a light matter to be a Kings Son? is it but a small matter, think you, to call God Father? is it nothing to be born to a Crown Immortal, that fadeth not away? This is honour, this is preferment worth the having, worth the looking after, worth the venturing ones life for. This is true Nobility to stand thus nearly related to him, before whom the Angels do vail their glorious Faces, and at whose feet the four and twenty Elders lay their Crowns. The Queen of *Sheba* thought *Solomons* Servants, happy, who stood always in his presence, and heard his Wisdom; but what would she have said, had she but known the honour and glory of this Prince! O blessed are those that stand always in thy presence!

O God blessed are thy servants, blessed are those which see thy Glory and hear thy Wisdom ; blessed are they that may have free access to thee. O let me have this preferment, though I live like *Jab* at his lowest, and dye like *Lazarus*. Let others sue for the favour of Princes, let them make the best of what the world can give, let them desire that which hath been dangerous to more than *Haman* ; I hope I should never envy them, might I but have more frequent and intimate converse with God, may I be but acquainted with him ; O may I have but a heart more to admire, love, and delight in Him, and serve him with the strength and intensness of my Soul while I am here, and stand for ever in his presence, and behold his glorious Face with joy hereafter. O my Soul, what meanest thou, that thou still speakest so faintly and coldly of such infinitely glorious things ? Why doth not a new lie animate thee at the very mention of these things ? Hast thou not far more cause to raise up thy desponding Spirits with cheerfulness, than old *Jacob*, when his Son *Joseph*, who was Lord of that Land, sent for him into *Egypt* ? Thy Father, O my Soul, thy Brother is Lord, not of *Egypt*, not of *Goshen*, but of *Eden*, of *Zion* ; he is the King of that glorious City, the new *Jerusalem* ; Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-stool, and yet behold the Waggon that he hath sent for thee, behold the provision that he hath sent to maintain thee comfortably in thy journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan* ; is not this enough ? O my Soul awake, up and see him before thou diest ; behold, he is coming, the Bridegroom is coming, *Joseph* is coming, to meet thee with a gallant Train,

Train, in a glorious Equipage; It is but yet a little while, and thy Husband will come and fetch thee in Royal State, attended with a numberless retinue of Saints and Angels. O hadst thou but an eye to behold their Chariots and Horsemen coming, upon the Mountains: he is coming, he is coming, he will be here quickly, he will not tarry, he is at the door. Contemplate sometimes on these things, and a little antedate that Glory by Spiritual Meditation; do but think what a brave sight that will be to see the Mountains covered with Chariots of Fire, and Horses of Fire, when the Heavens shall bow before thy Friend, and the Earth shall melt at his presence, and yet thy Heart not faint within thee; when the King shall come in the Clouds to fetch his Friends to his own House, where they shall dwell for Ever. This Honour have all the Saints.

Eleventhly, He is a suitable Friend. It is suitability that sweetens Society. I can easily believe a poor Country Peasant can take as much content in the Company of a poor man like himself, as in the Society of a Prince; an unlearned Countryman is no way fit to converse with Courtiers, and States-men; the vastness of the distance would so much swallow his mind, and the unsuitableness of his Spirit to such company takes off that content which otherwise he might enjoy. But yet in Spirituals, though the distance between God and Man beyond a possibility of our Conception, and the disproportion infinite, yet the Soul of Man, being immediately from God, and Spiritual like God, and having Divine new Nature infused into it by the Spirit in

Regeneration, it finds an infinite suitableness, pleasure and content in the enjoyments of Gods Presence, and it is not sunk, but raised by an Union, Converse and Society with it's Maker. The truth of it is, did Man but understand his own Original right, he would think it infinitely below his noble Parentage to converse with, and have intimate delightful Society with any but God, and those which bare the same relation to God with himself, or to bring poor strangers acquainted with him as well as themselves. There is not a Match upon Earth fit for the soul of Man to be Matched to: But in that other Country there is a Match indeed every way suitable; a Spirit for a Spirit, an everlasting God for an everlasting Soul; a precious Jesus for a precious Soul, a holy God for those which he hath made Holy like himself: and that is none of the least of mans Happiness, that notwithstanding that infinite distance that is Naturally between him and his God, yet that God should make in his Creature such Noble Dispositions, and such Divine Qualifications, that there should be the greatest suitability in the World between God and the Soul, and the Soul and God; and they both take wonderful content in the enjoyments of one another. This is in part here, but compleated in Glory. This we may find oft in Scripture expressed in the nearest Relations, and dearest Affections. Hence God is said to be a Father, and they his Children; a Husband, and they his Spouse. Now what greater suitability can there be than between Father and Children, Husband and Wife? God is also said to delight in them, and they in him; to rejoyce in their Company, and they in His; and how

how could this be, except there were a suitability in them one to another. Their wills are suited; what God wills they will; and what God loves they love; and so what they love, as his Friends, God loves; one doth not thwart and contradict the other. O how sweet then must the company, the communion of such Friends be! O were our hearts as they should be! were we more like God, we should quickly experience the unspeakable joy of our Souls, how suitable a Friend he is to a soul: we should soon find, that as clay and stones are as unsuitable food for the body, so the world is unsuitable food for the soul to feed on, and that it is God alone that can fill and satisfy the vast desires of it. O, I say again, were we but as we came out of our Makers hands, or rather were we trimmed up in our eldest Brothers Robes, and brought into the immediate presence of this great King, were we set before that glorious Throne where the infinite brightness of his Majesty shines, so that the Angels themselves do veil their faces before him; yet for all that we should not long stand silent, as if the place and company were unsuitable to us, it would not be long before we should carry it as those that were nearly related, and had intimate acquaintance with him that sits upon the Throne. O the unspeakable sweetness that will be in the enjoyment of his Company! no tediousness, no irksomeness at all upon our Spirits. We shall quickly understand our work, our privilege. O infinite goodness! O boundless love! O let me be always solacing my Soul in the contemplation of these things! O let the very thoughts of them be a Heaven upon Earth to my soul! but

here, O here's the grief while we are here in a strange Countrey, there is something (in all the poor fallen Children of *Adam*, nay, in those of them that are recovered, and by grace brought into a re-union with God) there is, I say, something in God unsuitable to them, and in them unsuitable to God ; and this, O thi makes our lives so uncomfortable: but converse with God will wear off a great deal of that. When thou comest to lay off thy Rags, and to put off thy old suit, and to put on that new one that is making for thee, I mean after Death, when thou comest to glory, thou wilt find the case strangely altered with thee. In Heaven there will be a perfect Harmony, Suitableness and Agreement between God and thee for Ever ; and thou wilt take infinite complacency and delight in him, and he in thee. And thus shalt thou spend Eternity in unconceivable joy, delight, and pleasures. This is Heaven, a perfect suitableness to God, and enjoying him for Ever. O when, when, when shall it once be? *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Come O blessed Father by thy Spirit, and burn up what is unlike thee ! O Create a greater suitableness between my Soul and thee. O Come thou down to me, or take me up to thee ! O could we but talk with one of those happy Creatures that hath been in the very presence of God in glory, and should we ask him, whether he were not weary of the same work, of the same company, the same place ; what a swer, do you think he would make you? No more weary than a man upon the Rack but just before would be of perfect ease ; no more than a healthful hungry Man is of eating ; no more weary than the Sun is of running, than the*
Fire

Fire of ascending, or a Stone of falling towards the Center. *Sen. Epist. 10. I know not where I had rather be than with him: I was once upon Earth as you are now, and now I am in Heaven, and in neither of both these places can I find one that I can take more delight in than God. I must say as he, Psal. 73. 24. Whom have I in Heaven but him? and there is none upon Earth that I can desire in comparison of Him. I can't desire a better employment than a delightfull constant attending upon my God; can I have better Company than such a Father! Can a greater happiness be conceived than Eternal glory, a pleasanter place than Heaven? That which I can speak, you can't hear; and could you (though in this perfect glory) I can't express what you will find and feel when you come hither. O had I but known so much as I do now, when I was in your condition upon Earth, I should with incomparable greater earnestness have sought after acquaintance with God than I did. In his presence is fullness of Joy, at his right hand are pleasures for Evermore: Now I feel, now I know it. I thought one smile sweet upon Earth, but now I see and feel infinitely more: what you enjoy now, is a shadow in comparison of what you will enjoy hereafter. O what do you mean, that you prize his favour no more, that you get no more intimate acquaintance with Him? What do you mean that you are so unwilling to come to this place of joy? O, were you but possesst of what I speak of, you would say what I say, you would never be weary of praising and serving him, you would never wish your self out of his presence, and think it not possible to be in more suitable society. Is it so, O my soul, what then do-st*

thou here? Make hast O my soul, stay no longer here below, but know thy privilege, understand where thy comforts are.

Twelfthly. He is a wise Friend, All the men and women in the world have great, mighty affairs to manage, and they want Skill, Wisdom and Discretion for the right management of these things, they are wofully to seek as to their great business; they are wise to do evil, but in Spirituall, they are become stupid, sottish Fools; and as to the carrying on of their great work, they do it with the greatest imprudence in the world: and they will most certainly for ever undo themselves, except one that is wiser than themselves undertake to help them. All things go backward with them, and they labour in the very Fire whilst they act without God; and it is impossible it should be otherwise as long as there is such a disproportion between mans business, and his Spirit; Man is carnal, and his work is spiritual. Would an ignorant poor Creature that is but one remove above a Beast, be fit to manage the great matters of Government? How ridiculously would he behave himself in a Chair of State! How strangely would an unlearned Man bungle, should he go about to open one of the profound Demonstrations of Mathematicks! But a natural man is far more unskilful than any of these, as to the carrying on of that great Employment that he hath to look after, while he is on this side Eternity; his business is to serve his Maker, but what pityfull work doth he make of it? Man is made for an everlasting State, he is sent into this world to provide for another: a Good, a Happiness there is, which he is to look after;

after; he once had a fair Estate, but he hath spent and lost it all, and he is to see to the recovering of it again. He hath been in Arms against his lawful Sovereign, and been guilty of the highest Treason, and thereby hath forfeited his Life, his Soul; now he hath his pardon to sue out, and how doth he go to work in this one thing? To mention no more, Why he goes to beg a pardon arm'd Cap-a-pe, and with his Sword drawn, he comes to ask pardon for one Treason, and he is found acting of another. *Lord have mercy upon me, and give me leave to break thy Laws*, is the sum of all his Prayers. He talks of Heaven, and yet makes all the hast he can to Hell; he is told he is out of the way, but he laughs at him that tells him so; and that's his best; Sometimes he rages, and desires with all speed to remove him that would set him in the Road of Zion; he calls for a Hatchet to cut down the bough upon which himself stands. And this is your man of Wisdom. The man is under sail in the midst of Rocks and Sands; and if he would but look, he might see many doleful Spectacles, to the tops of Masts, ship-wracked souls I mean; & though the Pilots tell him of the danger, yet he says he will never believe; but that's the best and the safest road to the Harbour, and so on he goes as if he were sure he could not miscarry; and all this while he will not be perswaded but that he acts very wisely; he judgeth it one of his greatest comforts, that he runs to misery without any hinderance; and how can it otherwise be, except men were spiritually Wise? and who can teach man this Wisdom? Who shall instruct him? Who shall help him, now his affairs are upon the mat-

ter almost desperate? why, if thou wilt but hear, here is one that will yet undertake their soul cause if you will be advised by him; for this is he will set all right. And O how doth he call after you! How willing to give you his advice! how desirous to assist you. *Prov. 1. 20. &c. Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her Voice in the streets: She cryeth in the chief places of the concourse, in the openings of the Gates, she uttereth her Words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And ye scornners delight in scorning, and fools hate Knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my Words unto you. And will you set at naught all his Counsels, and have none of his reproofs! Will you rather be ruined than be beholding to him for Advice. Let me put in one word; if this wise Counsellor be not for you, he will be against you; and if you can find any can order your sad affairs more to your advantage, I pray make use of him; but if you will be ruled by him, you can't miscarry, as ill a condition as you are in; though thou beest quite broke, yet he will give you such a stock as that you may set up again, and such directions as that you can't but thrive, if you will but follow him. It is he that teacheth his Spiritual Frugallity, not to part with that for a trifle which will be a rich commodity ere long; it is he who persuades us to make the best use of every thing; it is he that teacheth Fools more true wisdom than the great Politicians of the World; though the world judge them weak, yet they have wit enough to make a good Bargain; to value Heaven before Hell, to fly from everlasting Burnings. They are wise enough to know what*

what is for their real advantage, and what not. This is he that would bring thee acquainted with him. It is he who giveth his so much understanding, as to know the true worth of things, and the difference between good and evil ; finite and infinite, time and Eternity. Who is it that *David* goes to for counsel, when his politick Enemies combined against him ? Where doth he advise ? who brings him out of all his intricacies ? Is it not He that I am periwading you to go to, who was never out-witted, who can easily turn the counsel of *Achitophels* into foolishness ; It is he who can infatuate the great Sages of the World, and make them weaker than Children in their Councils. And this is he who will be a constant Councillor to all those that are his friends, his acquaintance. *Seneca, Epist. 41. 81.* gives excellent Counsel indeed, which if we will precisely follow our matters can't but succeed. *Art thou never in any straights ? are all thy affairs carried on with so much prudence, both as to time and Eternity, that thou standest in no need of advice ? Art thou sure that this will always be thy condition ? If not, why then wilt thou not be perswaded to strike in here ?* Why, if you will believe them, which to their Comfort have tryed him again, and again, it is your unspeakable interest and wisdom to get God for your Friend, and then whatsoever you do, shall prosper by his advise ; a poor Christian can out-wit all the policy of Hell, and shew himself more wise than those which call himself Fool, and count him mad, *Psal. 73. 24.* *David* durst trust none else to guide him ; but with his conduct he doth not fear but that he shall

shall come safe to his journey's end, *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsels, and bring me to thy glory.* And again he saith, by the help of his Counsellour he was wiser then his teachers, *Psal. 119. 18.* Hear therefore what you had best to do as matters stand with you, *Prov. 4. 11.* *He will teach thee in the way of Wisdom: He will lead thee in the right paths, When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightned, and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble, &c. 1. Cor. 1. 15.* *Because the foolishness of God is wiser then men.* That which looks most contemptibly, if thoroughly understood, will be found to have more depth in it than the wisest men of the world can reach. To choose such a Friend this is wisdom, this is prudence. The godly man knows that he hath a great cause to be decided ere long, and that it will be no lost labour to make the Judge his Friend. Well, what say you, sinners, is this considerable that I do now propound, or is it not? Can you plead your own cause, can you clear your title to glory without him? if not, be well advised before you slight such a motion, as I now do make to you.

13. He is an immortal Friend. I, that's a Friend indeed. If one friend could be sure to live just as long as the other; and were friends sure never to want the advice, comfort, society, and help one of another, it would not a little advance the worth of a friend, But where is such a one to be found? What Histories can give us an account of such amities? Let persons be united in never so close an union, conjoynd in the tightest knot that nature can tie, yet death will first or last dissolve it. So that sometimes I have

have been almost of this mind, as to all worldly friends, considering them abstract from God (for grace in any friend doth unpeakably sweeten the relation, and such a relation will not dye) if we compare the shortness and uncertainty of possessing, and the bitterness in losing, with the sweetness of enjoying; that it's somewhat difficult to resolve, whether such short-liv'd comforts are worth the looking after. Not but that I think a friend, a true friend, a great mercy, and much to be desired; but really, if our Affections be not for Gods sake, if our love be not regulated by Religion, I can easily believe that the bitterness in losing doth over ballance the pleasure in enjoying. And who would much trouble himself to get that with care, which must be possess'd with fears, and will be parted with with Tears? All worldly enjoyments will serve us thus. When we expect most from them, and please our selves to think what Content we enjoy in them, ten to one, if God love us, but that he either imbitters, or takes away that Comfort from us. One saith, I had a dear Husband, such a one as never woman had, but he is Dead, I have lost him. Another saith, I had a precious Child, a Brother, but he is gone. And every body will be in this note first or last. And if the case be thus, who would be so foolish as to let out the strength of his soul, upon that which he may soon be deprived of? But here, here's a Friend, whom you need not fear over-loving, nor losing; a never-dying Friend, one that will be sure to out-live you, (*Ar. Epict. l. 3. c. 22.*) *Say of what you will, that it is mortal, and you have disgraced it enough? for how can*

that

that be of any great worth which can die, and when I have most need of it I may want; but this can't be said of God, he only is immortal, and not subject to changes. As for the favour of Princes and great Ones, at the best, it is but an uncertainty: for it may be all thy hopes are bound up in his life, and that hour which puts an end to his days, puts a period to thy Comfort? But it is another kind of friend that I would have you acquainted with. O why do Christians dote upon that which is so short-liv'd? Make but choice of this friend, and you shall never say of him, he is dead, I have lost him. Wherefore put not your trust in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help; for his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his Earth. But happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope and love is fixed upon the Lord his God which made Heaven and Earth, &c. That God who is called the Living God, Psal. 146. 3, 4, 5, 6.

14thly, He is a present friend, a friend that is allways in all places. Mans condition may possibly be such, as that he may be deprived of the company of his dearest worldly Relations, he may be sequestred from the society of his most helpful and necessary Friends! How oft have the dear Children of God been clapt up in Dungeons, not only from the sight, but from the knowledge of their most affectionate acquaintance? It's no unusual thing for them to be Banish'd from their native Country. Wives and Children, among Savage Men and Beasts, they have no man to make their complaints to, but such as will increase their sorrows. How frequently may they be in such a condition, as that they may not see, hear or speak to any Friend! what

Bolts

Bolts and Bars, what Walls and Guards to keep them from them, which if they could not free them from, yet might in some measure alleviate their misery? But now God is such a friend, who cannot, who will not be kept out from his, by Walls of Brass, or Bars of Iron, he will find out his Friend in the darkest hole, and bare them company therein spite of all the powers of Hell. O how reviving are his visits? What Cordials doth he bring along with him? This is that which makes the People of God so very chearful, when their Enemies make account their condition is such, as that it hath no mixture of joy or comfort in it. Was that a Prison or Heaven where those Martyrs were singing Hallelujah? Was that a time, to be so merry, when all the World disowned them, when they were loaded with Reproaches, and Irons, and Chains, counted the troublers of the Nation, mad-men, Hereticks? the case is clear: the sight of this Friend made them forget their Scorns, and think their Chains Gold, and their Prison Liberty. It was God that spake it, and he hath been found to be as good as his word, *Isa. 43. 1. 2. Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine: When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee: and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* Who was that which bore the three children Company in the fiery furnace? who was that which went into the Lions Den to visit Daniel? who brought Paul alive to the shore

shore when the ship in which he went was
 wrak't? Was it not this Friend, that I am
 now speaking of? I might be large in reciting
 the Miraculous preservat ons which God hath
 vouchsafed to his, which is a manifest token of
 his presence, when none can come near, besides
 he will not be far off. In the greatest Extremities,
 when none durst own them, then God reckons
 it time for him to shew himself. It was not for
 nothing that the *Psalmist* could speak so chearful-
 ly when others were quaking, *Psal.* 46. 12, &c.
 What was it that bore up his spirits, when there
 were such dreadful Commotions? What refuge
 hath he to shelter himself under in time of such
 Calamity? In what doth his strength lie, that
 he is so confident? Whence doth he expect
 a supply, that he holds out so bravely, when his
 Enemies are so numerous, and his Friends so
 scarce? Why *David* hath his invisible Friends,
 as well as visible Enemies. Ask him and he will
 tell you, that God is his refuge and strength, and
 he is his confidence, and he will come in when he
 hath the greatest need: he will be a very present
 help in trouble. And that is the reason that *Da-*
vid will not fear, though the Storm were far
 greater than ever yet he was in, though the Earth
 were removed, and the Mountains were cast into
 the midst of the Sea; though the foundations of
 the Earth were shaken, though the Sea should
 roar and threaten the earth with another deluge,
 he can sleep as securely as a person little concern-
 ed; and this he can speak, not only for himself,
 but for the whole City of God; God is in the
 midst of her, she shall not be moved. The Saint
 hath

hath a Friend that will bear him company in all places in all dangers, and in his company he need not be afraid. Let the least Child that God hath, give but one cry, and he will soon awake. It can't but be so from the spirituallicy of his Nature, the immensity of his Being, and the infiniteness of his Love. It was Orthodox Divinity and Doctrine that *Ar. Epictetus* l. 2. c. 14. Preached (though but a Heathen) when he said, *That the first Lesson that became a wise man to Learn, was, that there was a God, and then, that nothing in the World could be concealed from him, and that he knew not only our outward Actions, but our most secret workings, our closest curtain businesses; and not only so, but even our thoughts, projects and principles: Which speaks him every where, and consequently ready at hand to help his Friend at a dead-lift. Wherefore (saith the same Author, Idem. l. 3. c. 22.) think not that thou art alone when thou art in thy Chamber, in thy Bed, when thy Curtains are drawn, when thou art lock'd up in a Prison never so dark under ground; if thou art good, thou shalt have two Companions in Spight of the malice of all thy Enemies, a good Conscience, and thy God. This made that brave Moralist to dare his Enemies to do their worst to exclude his Friends from him. Can (saith he) any man be Banished out of the world? Wheresoever you send me, there will be the Sun, Moon, and Stars; but if not, God is there, I am sure, with whom I may talk, to whom I may pray; he will bear me company, though all the rest of my Friends be kept from me. And as long as you can't banish me from God, nor keep him from me, I shall reckon my self at liberty; and should I be sent out of this world into another, even there I should find my*

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Friend;

Friend; and he will scarce complain that is removed from a place where almost all are his Enemies, to a Place where all are his Friends. One would have thought these poor Heathens had been reading, *Psal.* 139. Do you hear O Christians, what language those forementioned persons speak? and shall these that never had the thousandth part of that advantage for the knowing of God, speak and act thus and shall Christians have such low thoughts of God? Because we do not see God, shall we therefore not believe that he is present every where? he that denies Gods own presence, had upon the matter as good deny his Being; for were it not so, how could he Judge the world with Justice? How could all things be sustained by his Power? God takes this as a very high Indignity, that any should in the least question this glorious Attribute, *Jer.* 23. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord.* And is not this a Friend worth the having, who will be sure not to be absent when you have need of him? the wicked indeed say, how doth God know, and can he see through the thick Clouds, and therefore they sin with confidence, and oppress the Friends of God without any fear; they hope God doth not behold, they think Omniscience knows not. I wish there were not something too like this sometimes in the thoughts of Gods people too; but let me only leave that one Scripture with the first sort, *Psal.* 94. 9. &c. *He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth men Knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth*

knoweth, &c. As for the desponding Christian that begins to think God is out of the reach of his Prayers, let me ask thee, O thou of little Faith, when did God ever absent himself from his in a time of Need; When was he quite out of the hearing of their Cry? I know indeed he may hide himself, yet then he is near them also, to try their Love and hear their Voice, for God loves to hear his Children Cry; (Earthly Parents may correct their Children for Crying, but God Chastiseth his Children usually for their Silence.) When he seems furthest off, He is but behind the Curtain, he is there where he with pleasure sees how earnestly his Children look up and down for him; and then when they are ready to sit down weeping, as if they had lost their Father; when they think they are quite forgot; and their Enemies begin to Triumph, and to ask, where now is your God? Then he lets both Friends and Foes know that he is near. And what say you to all this, you that as yet are strangers to God? Have you gotten such a Friend as he is, that will always be at your Elbow, that can and will come to help you (when other friends are far enough off,) whether man will or no? Have you got such a Friend? If not, why then will you not now accept of his Acquaintance, who will be such a Friend to all that love Him? No good man is without the Company of God; he walks with God, he talks with God, he eats with God, he drinks with God, and is entertained by him, and he sleeps in his Arms. God is with him in his Shop, in the Rode, at Home and Abroad, and who can miscarry that hath so helpful a Companion always with him? When thy Burdens are too heavy

do but complain, and he will either take them off thy back, or put them under his own Shoulders, and help thee to go away lightly with them; he will assist thee in six troubles, and in seven he will give thee help.

15. He is a Soul-Friend, Soul-Friends are the best Friends. As Soul-Affairs are the mightiest Affairs; so those that give us the greatest help in those matters ought to be valued. God is the great Soul-Friend; expect not to find him a friend to thy lust, this scares the wicked from him, who would be glad to be acquainted with God, if he would gratifie their Lusts, and please their wicked Humours, and give them eternal Happiness after a life of wickedness; that is, would Ungod himself for their sakes. But hold there man; you shall sooner see the Sun black, and have Fire cold, and find a Heaven in Hell, than have God a Friend to your Sin. God doth not promise to furnish all his Acquaintance with Provision for their sensuality, he will not put a Knife into thy hands to stab himself, or to cut thy own Throat. There are too many of such Friends in the world, and men are generally so foolish as to count them friends, which deserve another Name; these are they which help men to Hell, and shew them the shortest cut to eternal Misery, and this must go for a special Kindness. Sure men and women will scarce be always of this mind. Must Poison in a gilded Cup go for a Cordial, and a Kiss, though with a Dagger, it be taken for true Love? *Seneca* had more wit then to reckon such among Benefactors. He that can teach me the way to true Happiness, he that can help me to adorn, dress and trim my Soul? he by whose Instructions

I shall be more in love with virtue, and out of love with sin; he by whose directions I may be acquainted with my self, and made truly to value that which is really most excellent, this shall be my friend, this shall be my companion. And where are such friends to be found? How few of them in the world? Do not most, that go under that sweet name of friends, do one another the greatest unkindness that can be imagined? How do they encourage one another in an evil way, *Prov. 1. Psal. 2.* How do men tugg and pull to get one another apace into damnation; and if the wise world may be Judges, none must go for a friend, but he that would do me most mischief; none must be counted an enemy, but he that desires to do me the most real kindnesses. This sounds strangely: yet for all that, did it lie in my way, I could easily prove it. Yet I must confidently affirm, that every ones experience, first or last will say as much. Something of this I have taken notice of, in my conversing with dying men. I remember, once more particularly, being by a poor Creature that was just a going into another world, one of his old friends looked in to see him, at the sight of which person he gnashed his teeth, and could not indure him in the room, but cryed out, this was he that brought me to this, I may thank him, or I had not been in so sad a condition upon a death-bed. But this by the By. Open enemies are better than such friends. I say again, do not expect to have God such a friend. God loves his too well to let them undo themselves; he knows the worth of Souls; and pitties them that would part with their Souls for a trifle, and therefore he tells men plainly, that

which may be really prejudicial to the health of their Souls; he can't but let them know what is food, and what is poyson: what else is the meaning of those vehement expostulations? Why doth he send so many messengers one after another? To what purpose else doth he tender such promises, such encouragemen's? Be it known therefore unto thee O man, if thou understand'st the worth of thy own Soul, and would'st have that Soul of thine to do well for ever, and would'st have a friend for thy Soul, that there is but one such a friend to be found in the whole world, and that is God. O hast thou no regard at all for thy precious and Immortal Soul? Dost thou never think of that excellent thing within thee? Dost thou not care though thy Soul starve, be naked and miserable for ever? Is it nothing to thee, that thy Soul hath not so much as a shelter to hide it self under, when a dreadful storm shall rise and death shall turn it out of his old Tenements? Dost thou not believe that it must have a being somewhere for ever, and that either in everlasting Glory, or Eternal Burnings? And are these small Matters with you? What, will you for all this take no care in the World about these grand affairs? Had a special friend committed but a Dog to thee to take care of, you would have thought your self engaged in gratitude and honour, to have suited your care of him to your respect to the person from whom you had him, (*Epict.*) But dost thou not know, O man, that thy God hath committed a Soul to thy care, and hath told thee what thou shalt do to preserve the Life and Health of this thy soul, that it may be in good plight when he shall call for it. He doth tell thee what is its most natu-
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ral food, and what is not wholesome. He tells thee what thou shalt do to have that soul within thee everlastingly happy. And is all this of so little consequence, as to go in at one ear and out at the other? Are these things to be indifferent in? If mans Soul were like the Soul of a beast, the case were altered; if when his breath went out of his body there were an end of him, the matter were the less considerable; if he had ever a friend in another world, that could do as much for him as God can do, I should have little to say in this business. But since this is impossible, how can I bear to see thee neglect the making sure of such a friend? How can a Christian with any patience think, that those that he lives with, and dearly loves, should miss of such a Friend, without whom their Souls must be everlastingly miserable. If it were only for your bodies or estates, I should scarce use so many words, neither I believe need I; but when it is for your Souls and Eternity, who can be silent? Once more consider what a Friend thou mayst have; it is a Friend for thy Soul. Alas man, it is thy soul, thy precious soul that lies at stake; that Spirit within thee, which is more worth then a world; it is that which is in hazard, and here is a friend that offers thee to make that Soul of thine Happy for ever. Thy Soul hath abundance of Enemies. Some would debase it, others would robb thee of it, others would clap up a hasty match between that Noble Creature and a Servant, the World I mean; And there are very few that have any true kindness for it, and thou knowest not the worth of that Jewel, thy Soul: but here, here's a Friend, if thou wilt but leave it with him, he will take care of it, it shall not be marted away for

nothing. Here's one will do that for its security, honour and happiness, that all the world be-
 sides can't do. If therefore thou hast any love for
 thy poor Soul, if thou settest any price upon that
 precious thing within thee; in a word, if thou
 wouldst have thy Soul do well in another world,
 O strike in here, close with these tenders, listen
 to the counsel of him who offers you the best ad-
 vice in the world. He, he it is that now offers
 thee that thou canst never value enough; he it
 is that will Feed, Cloath, and portion that Soul
 of thine, and after that marry thee to his only Son;
 by which match you' will be made for ever. O
 did men and women but know what a Soul is,
 did they imagine what a dreadful miscarriage of
 a Soul is, did they but in any measure understand
 the things of their peace, could they but conceive
 what God could and would do for their Souls,
 I need to spend but little time in perswading
 them to commit their Souls to him, to be acquain-
 ted with him, who will be sure to take special
 care of their Souls, that they may do well what-
 ever is neglected. O could you but see, did you
 but know what a sad taking they are in, that go
 into the other world with a poor naked Soul, and
 know no body in the world there, and have ne-
 ver a friend that doth take any notice of them,
 you would then think I spoke what I do with
 reason enough, and that my words were too
 short, and my exhortations too faint in a mat-
 ter of such concernment. O sinners, I tell you,
 nay, God tells you, Soul-matters are the greatest
 matters in the world. I am sure Christ thought
 so, or else he would not have been at so much
 cost about them; those that are in their wits and
 unde-

understand themselves, they know as much too, and so will you, ere a few years, it may be hours, be past. Those that now make but a pish of all this, when they have been but one quarter of an hour in another world, will say as I do, that a Soul-Friend is the only Friend, and that Soul-concerns are the great concerns, things of weight and moment indeed; and that it would have quitted the cost to have taken some pains to have look'd out for such a one that could have stood the Soul in some stead in that other world; and that above all, it would have been no folly nor madness to have accepted of the kindness of one that desired earnestly to be acquainted with them, and to do their Soul a good turn. O that they had but been so considerate, as to have embraced such a motion when it was offered! And this brings me to the next Qualification of this Friend.

16. He is a necessary Friend. There is an absolute necessity of being acquainted with him. 'Tis possible for a man that hath very few friends upon earth, to live as happily as he that hath many. Multitude of acquaintance, such as many are, may contribute much to a mans care and sorrow. And as for most friends, such as are commonly so called, it is better to have their room than their company. A man may live without the acquaintance of Nobles, he may be as Free, Chearful, and Rich without the knowledge of such as them. One may live holily, and die joyfully, and may be happy for ever, though he never saw the face of a Prince, though he was never at Court, though he lived and died a stranger to all wordly friends. One may be disown-
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ed by his Father, hated by his Mother, slighted by all his Relations, and have never a friend under the Sun that will own him, and yet for all that be in a state of truer felicity, than those that are dayly attended with troops of visitors, whose gates are seldom shut, whose houses are never empty : but amongst all that comes, God never comes to them, as for his company they are strangers to it ; this man I may write miserable for all his great and many friends. And him that hath the company of God in acquaintance with his Redeemer I'll call happy, though he have never a friend in the world besides. Multitude of friends seldom add much to our comforts, but always to our cares. A man may go to Hell for all his great acquaintance with men ; but its impossible, if we are greatly acquainted with God to miss of Heaven, when men are unkind. If God be kind, it's well ballanced ; but if God frown, whose smiles can comfort ? I may be happy, though I am very little in mans favour ; but its impossible to be happy without Gods favour. To be a stranger to God, is to be a stranger to peace, joy, Heaven. O its sad being without God ! If I should declare the Judgment of most in the world, at least if their practice may speak for them, they see very little need of acquaintance with God. They do not write *Must*, upon the things of Religion. They must eat, they must drink, they must sleep, and if they want any of these things, they count themselves in a sad condition. But further, they must riot, they must be drunk, they must whore, they must have what their Lust calls for, let it be what it will, they must get into the favour of such and such a great person

person whose displeasure they have incurred :
 These are things that the world say must be ;
 they are reckoned among the necessary things :
 but they do not say they must have a Christ.
 They must be reconciled to God, they must de-
 ny themselves, they must seek first the Kingdom
 of Heaven ; No, these are indifferent things a-
 mongst them, these are things minded by and by,
 if not matter of scorn and jesting ; these the world
 thinks unnecessary things. It's necessary their
 flesh should be pleased, it's necessary the Devil
 should be obeyed, its necessary they and theirs
 should be somebody in the world ; these are mat-
 ters of weight, for these they think it worth the
 while to toil and moil, to ride early and late,
 and to lose their sleep, and think they can never
 do too much ; and all this while they see no
 need at all of getting a friend for their Souls, no
 need at all of knowing, loving and delighting in
 God. Well, seeing the case is thus, seeing it is
 no great matter whether you know God, or be
 known of him ; be not then troubled at the day
 of Judgment, if God look upon you as a stran-
 ger then, be not grieved (seeing the knowledge
 of God is nothing with you) if God says he knows
 you not ; if Gods presence be no such material
 thing, complain not for the want of it ; be
 content, if you can, to hear him say, *Depart, I
 know you not.* O, shall I thus leave you poor
 ignorant sinners ? Consider for the Lords sake,
 for thy Soul sake, whether it be a necessary thing
 to avoid everlasting burning ; is it a necessary
 thing to be saved ? Is Eternal Glory and Hea-
 ven necessary ? Dare you say these are unnecessa-
 ry things ? If these be necessary, them I am sure
 God

God and Christ are necessary; *For this is Life Eternal to know God, and him whom he hath sent Jesus Christ.* O how will the case be altered ere long, with the God-hating and Christ-despising world? When they shall be quite despoiled of all that which they prized above the knowledge of God, when all their friends shall appear to be enemies, when all their hopes shall be swept down like a Spiders web: O will they not then be of this mind, that it was no such slight matter that I was so earnest with them about, that acquaintance with God was no such unnecessary thing as they took it to be; and that there was more need of getting an interest in Christ, than of running to a Play-house, or a Whore-house. How will they rend the skies with their fruitless wishes? How will the Mountains eccho with their doleful lamentations? G that God would but know them! O that they might not hear that word, Depart! But seeing all that to little purpose, how then will they exclaim against themselves? O that they should be such fools, that they should be so madly besotted, as to neglect the looking after acquaintance with God! Time was, that God would have had them to come to him; he called after them, and sent for them again and again, but they would none of his company; they desired not the knowledge of the most High; they said to him, Depart from us: and now they have what they then desired; now they see that the Ministers had cause enough to say what they did, and a thousand times more. As troublesome as it was to hear of Hell, it's worse to feel it. They see now *Must is for the Soul, and not the Body.* O that

that men and women would be now as serious in their judgments about these things as they will be shortly ! Consider, O man, that as little as thou mindest these things, these are the only thing that are necessary. Thou *Must* have a God for thy Friend, a Christ for thy Saviour to save thee from thy Sins, or else thou *Must* be Damned, or else thou *Must* be Cursed for Ever. Thou mayst lie Racked upon thy bed of sickness, where none can help thee ; thou mayst Rot in a stinking Dungeon, where no man can relieve thee ; thou mayst be Roasted in the Flames, and yet for all this be a happy man. Worldly Ease, Pleasure, Health, Riches, are none of those absolutely necessary things. A man may go to Hell and have them all ; and a man may go to Heaven and want them. Thou mayst have Eternal Rest in another Life, though thou hast scarce a day of ease in this. One may be a *Favourite* of God, though as miserable as *Job*. But what will you say, of that man that hath not a God to go to ? This, this is the miserable man with a witness ? O that seeing mens lives are so short, they would wisely husband their precious time in minding nothing but necessary things ? O that unnecessaries might be cut off. When I am about to undertake a business, let me ask my soul this Question : O my Soul, is this a business of absolute necessity ? Hast thou not something of greater importance that is yet undone ? We enter not into the List for Honour, where it is no great matter whether we Conquer, or no ; we perswade not men to busie themselves about Toys, we are not so importunate about a thing of nothing. No Sirs, as unnecessary as you think these things we speak of are,

are, ere long you will say as much as we do, and more too; you'll shortly find, that it was as much as your life and happiness was worth that lay at stake. These are things we must mind you of, or else we hazard our Souls; and they are things that you must mind also, or else you hazard yours. I want significant words enough, to express the weight and importance of these things; O that what is wanting of that Nature, might be supplied with Tears, Groans and Compassions. I am through Mercy ashamed of my own Heart, (O that I were more so) that I should speak of such serious matters so slightly. It is not now a time to jest. O my Soul, when thou art to discourse with miserable Men and Women, which refuse their Happiness, and dote upon their misery. Thou art now about a Work that concerns Souls, and their Eternal State. Tell me dear Friends, do you in sober sadness believe that you have immortal Souls? Do you indeed know that your Souls are naturally Enemies to God, and that if you be not Reconciled to God, that you must be dealt with as Enemies? Do you really believe all this? Do you believe what a dreadful thing it is to look such an Enemy in the Face when he shall sit in Judgment? Further, do you believe what it is to lie down in devouring Flames, and to dwell with everlasting Burning? Do you not think it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God? And if you do not, let me tell you, you are worse then mad; if you do believe all this, why, then let me ask you again, whether you conceive it unnecessary to use the utmost Care and Diligence to get Acquainted with Him: Who can deliver you from the

the wrath to come? O Friends, I call you so, and I believe most of you love me dearly! O that you would do me one kindness; I should count it the greatest kindness that you can do me; why, what is that you say! Why, it is but to pity your own Souls, and to mind that one thing necessary, and to pity them that are Mourning for your dry Eyes, and hard Hearts? What say you to all this? If you have any thing to say against the necessity of these things, I am ready to plead the Case with you, &c. Well, if it be not necessary to know God and Christ, and lay in Provision for Eternity, what then is necessary? if it be not necessary to serve, love, and delight in Him, who can deliver from everlasting Death, and Reward with everlasting life, what then is? Once more, for your Souls sake consider what you do, when you vigorously pursue worldly things, and look upon the Favour, and Displeasure of God, as small things! O write not these things down amongst the superfluous things which are to be minded by the by. Remember this, that it is very possible for a man to be exceeding Holy, and yet to be altogether unknown to the world; but it is altogether impossible to be truly Happy, and yet unacquainted with God.

17. He is a tryed Friend, Thousands and Millions can from their own experiences say all this, which I have said of him, and much more; but I shall pass this over at present, having hinted it already; and because it may be I may touch upon something of the same Nature hereafter.

18. He is an everlasting friend. I shall be but brief in speaking to this Head, because what might have been spoken of this, fell under that
of

of his immortality. Yet because it is possible to conceive God immortal in himself, and yet by reason of mans default, his kindness to him to be infinite; so it was in respect of the Angels that fell from him. But now, Blessed be free Grace, Man stands upon surer Ground then ever he did, the Children of God have a firmer Bottom by far, than *Adam* had when he was in Paradise; his State is more secure, being once united to God in Christ, than that of the Angels of Heaven in their first Creation. For, that their State was mutable, is *de facto* proved; But now, blessed be rich Goodness, if we can but make sure of Reconciliation with God, again it is impossible for us to miscarry. God hath sworn, and he will perform it, that the Heirs of Glory might have the more strong Consolation, *Isa. 54. 9. 10.* *For this is as the Waters of Noah: for I have sworn that the Waters of Noah shou'd no more go over the Earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee: neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.* Gods children need not fear dis-inheriting: His Gifts and Callings are without Repentance. If God loved us while we were enemies, how much more being reconciled, will he continue his Love to us? Once a Child of God, and a Child of God for Ever; once in favour, and never out of it again, *Rom. 9. 35, 36.* *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword. Nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Who can pluck*

pluck us out of the arms of the Almighty? Who, or what is that which can alienate our Father's affections from us? If the promise of God, which saith, I will never, never, never, never, never leave nor forsake you, be valid, if his oath bind him, if the blood of Christ continue always to be satisfactory, if his mediation can prevail, if the nature of God be unchangeable, we are well enough, we are safe, if this be but clear that we are really reconciled to God, if we be acquainted with him, we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto Salvation. If they had been of us, saith the Apostle, no doubt they would have continued with us. It is possible indeed, yea common for men to pretend love to God, and to seem to have a true friendship for him, and yet not to be truly so. To have a name to live, and to live are two things. It is not unusual to bear God company (as I may say) abroad, and yet at home to have some body that they have a greater kindness for. It is common to go along with God (if I may so call it) in the external actions of Religion, and yet to desert him at last, *Isa.* 58. 1, 2, 3. *Mat.* 7. 21. There are many that seems to bid fair for Heaven, and if cap and knee will do, God shall have that; they will give him the husk and shell, that they may keep the kernal for one that they love better. Thousands there are of such persons in the world, and these profess abundance of kindness for God, they come oft to his house, and sit down there, and make as if they were his friends, and his acquaintance; and some of Gods servants, by a mistake, may bid them welcome, but yet for all this they may be strangers; only they have

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heard

heard of God, and can talk of him, and it may be, have given him many transient visits, but yet they want the real properties of Friends: they never knew what it was to be brought nigh to the Father, by the Son; to have a sence of their lost state and estrangement from God, and under a sence of this, to make earnest inquiry after him; they never knew what it was to converse with God, to have an intimate acquaintance with him; to be sending out the breathings of their Souls after him, and to be unsatisfied without him; they took up a trade of lifeless duties, and that was all. As for the life and power of Religion, they never understood it: communion with God, they heard oft of, but never understood what it meant, they never savoured, and relished the things of God, nor with any suitableness or complacency ingaged in his service: And as for those more secret actings of Religion, to take up the interest of God, to design his glory, to be deeply concerned for his honour, observing their affections, and the workings of their hearts in duty, to take notice of answers of prayers, or to look after their petitions, when they are out of their mouths, they know not what these things are. So that from hence it appears, that God, and they, were never really acquainted: no wonder then that they do forsake God, and are forsaken of him. The building might look neatly, and the house seem to be strong; but because it was built upon the sands, it need not seem strange, if it fall when the winds rise, and the waves beat against it: but I say it, and say it again, the house that is built upon a rock will not, cannot fall: Is a man be really united to God in Christ, and the

the work of Grace thoroughly wrought upon him, it is impossible that God should forsake such a one. God can't but be true though man be false, he can't but value the satisfaction and intercession of his Son, he can't forget his own nature, *Isa, 49. 15, 16. Can a woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of thy hands: thy walls are continually before me, &c.* I do not say but that God may suspend the refreshing intimations of his love; nay, he may quite hide his face, and his dearest ones may look upon themselves as free among the dead, they may reckon themselves such as have no acquaintance with God, and yet for all this be exceeding dear to God; this is clear'd by every days experience. Nay, I may say, I believe that there are very few of them which know what Gods presence, smiles, and love is, but know in some measure what it is to have his face hid, to walk in the dark, and to see no light. It is no unusual thing of a Child of God to question his state, to fear whether all that he ever did were not in hypocrisy and formality, have not the best been made sometimes to question (especially upon some notable fall) whether what they did formerly did not proceed from meer common grace, or some less spiritual principle than the life of grace, and a divine nature within them. Were there ever any of the Sons of *Adam*, whom rich mercy hath plucked as Fire-brands out of the fire, to whom the Lord hath shewed his marvellous kindness, and love in *Christ*, that hath kept their watch so exactly, that have walked so closely with God, so as ne-

ver to have the least frown from him? were there
 ever any that lived all their days under a constant
 lively sense of their interest in divine everlasting
 love? if there be, they have fared better than *Job*
 did, they enjoyed more then ever *Heman* or *Da-*
vid did. A Child of God may oft be in a sad state,
 but yet he is always in a safe state: the purpose
 of God stands firm. Though for a small Moment
 he seem to forsake them, yet with everlasting
 mercies will he gather them: O Everlasting!
 That's a sweet word indeed in the Saints ear, he
 would not that one word should have been out
 of the Bible, left out of the promise for a world,
Isa. 54. If thou beest once truly acquainted with
 God, thy state is as safe, thy condition as sure as
 if thou wer't already in Heaven. God may and
 will chastise his with rods, but his loving kind-
 ness he will never remove from them, his mercy
 indures for ever. All that God gives to his friends
 and acquaintance; that is spiritual, is like him-
 self, Everlasting. God is not like short-spirited
 man, every Moment changing, one day doting
 upon an object, and the next day hating it as
 much. An earthly Prince may one Moment set
 his Favorite at his Table, and the next com-
 mand that he should be hanged. But far be it
 from the unchangeable God, that he should do
 thus. As for the great ones of the world, it hath
 been counted by some, and those none of the
 weakest, no small piece of policy, to keep out of
 their knowledge: their favours are so dearly
 bought, their kindness so uncertain, their displea-
 sure so dangerous, and yet so easily procured.
 But here it is far otherwise. It is God, and God
 alone that is an everlasting Friend, in whose pre-
 sence

sence there is fulness of Joy, and Pleasure for evermore. O these everlasting things are great things! An everlasting friend, and everlasting inheritance, everlasting glory, everlasting joy, everlasting life, and everlasting death, they are matters of weight! O why should not our very Souls be over-powred with the very thoughts of such things! O this unbelief, this unbelief!

19. He is one that is willing and desirous to be acquainted with you. What I have said before had signified little to us, were it not for this. It is a misery, and no comfort, to hear and know the great things which we must go without. But this is that which puts life into all those powerful *Motives* which I handled before. God is the most loving, most strong, and rich Friend, and with all he hath in him a sweet inclination to be acquainted with us. The terms that he offers are the most reasonable in the world. This, this is the comfort of all the poor fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam*; that though they have run away from God though they have left their Fathers house, and turn'd Prodigals; yet the tender-hearted compassionate Father is ready to receive them again; his arms are open, he meets them, while they are yet a great way off, he runs to them and falls upon their neck and kisses them, and expresseth the greatest kindness to them, and joy for their return. O unparalleled love! O infinite goodness! God hath expressed this his willingness to receive poor lost sinners abundantly throughout all the Scripture. If God had not been willing to have been friends again with man, what needed he to have given himself the

trouble of parting with his dearest Son, and sending him into the world to manage this great work of reconciling man to himself? why else was that precious blood shed? And to what purpose should he send so many Prophets, Apostles, and Ministers, for so many hundred of years, rising up early, and sitting up late? why are they commanded to cry aloud, to use so much earnestness to compell poor wandering strangers to come to his house, but that he might be acquainted with them? Can any one conceive that he should do all this without the least design of kindness? If all that God hath done to the reconciling man to himself, doth not speak his willingness to be reconciled to them, what can? *Isa.* 4. 5. Nay, so willing is he to receive them, notwithstanding all their back-slidings, that he teacheth them how they may address themselves to him most acceptably, he puts words into their mouths which they may use with good success when they come before him, *Hof.* 14. 1, 2, 4. Nay, that sinners may be the more confirmed in their expectation of his favour, he hath most solemnly sworn. *That he delights not in the death of sinners, but had rather that they should return and live.* Wherefore else is it that we are so straitly commanded, as we will answer the neglect upon our peril before God at their terrible day, that we preach the word in season and out of season? To what purpose should *Paul* expose himself to so many hazards both by Sea and Land? Why should he teach this Doctrine of Reconciliation night and day with Tears? Doth he not tell you that he did all this by Divine Dispensation, and that it was as much as his Soul was worth to wave

wave this work? And doth not all this speak
 his willingness to be friends again with man?
 Could not God have sent Legions of Angels
 with flaming Swords in their hands, when he
 sent his Son, and thousands of Prophets, Apo-
 stles, Ministers and Teachers? Might he not
 have proclaimed war against them for ever,
 when he followed them with the Embassadors
 of Peace? If he had had no thoughts of Agree-
 ment with them, could he not have spoken to
 them in thunder and lightning, with fire and
 brimstone, as well as in the still voice of the Go-
 spel? He could if he had pleased have made them
 to have known the breach of his Covenant, by
 giving them up to the will of their cruel enemies,
 God could as easily have cut off a whole world
 of us, as we can crush a moth, and easier too. But
 he is willing to shew forth the riches of his pati-
 ence and goodness, that thereby sinners might
 be brought to Repentance. How doth God fur-
 ther express his willingness to receive returning
 sinners, by engaging them by many temporal fa-
 vours? Who preserved that tender creature in
 the Womb, and brought it out of those dark
 Chambers into light? Who kept that helpless
 infant after it was in the world? Whose flax and
 wool do we wear upon our backs? To whom
 is it that we are beholding for every crumb we
 eat, and every drop we drink? who spreads
 our table for us, and makes our cups to over-
 flow? who brought us from the brink of the
 grave, when we had received the sentence from
 our Doctor and our Disease? And what is the Lan-
 guage of all these mercies, *but, return, O back-
 sliding Sinner, for in me is thy help found.* Love, de-

light in, and be acquainted with him, from whom thou hast received so many kindnesses, If thou wouldest accept of him for thy Lord, Husband, and Friend, who hath sent thee these tokens, thou shalt have other favours than these be. Is not this the meaning of all the common mercies that we daily receive from him? Why? was not thy breath stopt with an O th in thy mouth? Why is it that so many thousands that were born since thy self, are gone to their eternal state, when thou art still standing? What hast thou done to engage God more than others, that Worms should not be feeding on thee, when thou art feeding upon the fat and sweet? What is the *English* of all this? what are all these droves of mercies which God sends to thee, but to cool thy enmity against him, and to make thee, who art marching out in thy warlike furniture, to meet him with tears of joy and friendly embraces? Is not, *Love the Giver*, written upon all his tokens? what means his frequent visiting of thee but desire of acquaintance with thee? Had he had no desire at all to know you, and to be known of you, do you think he would have call'd so oft and so kindly at your door, would he have stood knocking with so much patience, and have poke to you so lovingly, if he desired still to be a stranger to you? Is this like one that desires your ruine? Did God never plead with thee by his Ministers, and urge the same Argument that I do now? Did you never hear such kind of exhortations as these? Why wilt thou go on to despise thy God, and to refuse his love? what reason hast thou to harbour such hard thoughts of him? Doth he deserve such

unkindness at your hands? How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? why will ye make light of that you can't possibly over-value? the favour of God, and acquaintance with thy maker. How oft have you grieved his spirit by your unworthy contempts? how many times have you given him cause to complain of your unhandsome usage, when he in very pity and compassion came to visit you: He hath reason to say now, as well as of old, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled against me* Isa, 1. 2. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?* Deut. 32. 6. *O that they were wise.* And be instructed *O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee*, Jer. 6. 8. Is not this the voice of mercy! have not these been Expostulations of the mighty God with his Rebellious Creatures? and yet how do they stand it out all this while, as if God were like to get so much by their acquaintance? Return, O foolish sinner, if thou makest any thing of Salvation and Damnation, if thou valuest everlasting glory, if thou thinkest the commands, threatenings and promises of the Almighty to be minded, come away and make no delay. O why wilt thou go on thus madly to undo thy self? come away poor soul, for all this it is not yet quite too late, thy glass is not yet quite run, thy soul is not yet fully fixed in its unchangeable state. Once more I make such an offer to thee, as I am sure none but a mad man will refuse; such an offer as none of the Kings and Lords of the world can make. The great and mighty Monarch of Heaven tenders thee an Alliance with

with himself; he sees how far thou art spent, how poor and low thou hast brought thy self by a dangerous and long war against thy Maker; he foresees what a condition thou wilt be in after a few more merry hours, except thou repent and turn. Wherefore in compassion to thy precious soul he hath commanded us to follow thee, and not to let thee be at quiet till thou hast given us a promise, that thou wilt return and humble thy self to thy God; and what, shall we still lose our labour! Shall all this come to nothing! O prodigy of unkindness! O wonder of patience! thou hast slighted the friendship of thy God, thou hast set light by Christ, and undervalued Heaven and Eternity for ten, twenty, thirty years already, and yet the Lord sends us once more in his name to ask you whether you are willing to have God for your Friend; God hath not yet said, *Cut him down, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into that lake that burns for ever. Bring those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before my Face.* God hath not yet spake that dreadful word, *Depart.* O what is it thou stayest for? What is it that makes this business to hang so long? What Lover is it that doth so long hold back thy heart? What is the matter that we can no more speedily and effectually manage this great affair? what is it that thou dost prefer before God? what is it that thou thinkest more worthy of thy warmest love than Christ? What is that great thing that thou stickest not to venture thy soul for? Act like a man that is rational and not beside himself. if the World be God, if Earth be better than Christ, then choose that; if Christ be God, then choose him. How long will

will you stand halting between two? love that which will last longest, be acquainted with him that is willing and able to do most for thee. Is the world worth more now than it was in *David's* time, when he preferred the favour of God before Thousands of Gold and Silver? Is the price of it raised? Can it bribe death, and stop the mouth of Divine Justice, and procure thee a real respect in another world? Go chaffer and see what bargain thou canst make; tell God that thou wilt give him thousands for thy brothers life, and as much more for the Lengthning the Lease of thy own to Eternity. What doth God say? is the Bargain made? is it not enough? why, add a world to it, will that do? If it will not do this, if this purchase be too great for thy purse, then go lower; can all thou hast keep thee from fears, get thee a stomach, procure thee ease, rectify thy constitution; will it do this, or will it not? if not, why shouldst thou value that which can do so little for thee, before that which can do all things for thee? Be perswaded at last to be wise. What is God like to get by your love, or lose by your hatred? what have you to boast of? what excellencies to set you out? what portion to advance you, that you stand thus upon your tearms? Come, let's hear a little what it is thou thinkest so highly of thy self for. I am sure your over-great beauty can't commend you; for a Black-moor may with better reason brag of comeliness, then such a deformed loathsome creature can of beauty. I am sure your helpfulness will not speak for you; for thou art a crazy, decrepid, sickly creature, that will cost God more to cure thee, than thou art worth a thousand times

times. It 'can't be for thy Estate that thou art so much desired, for all thy Gold is adulterate, thy Jewels counterfeit, thy All forfeited; and what is it then that thou hast yet to boast of? come and set it before us, that we may acknowledge our mistakes. Are the Cloaths upon thy back (as fine as thou art) thy own? is the Food that thou eatest paid for? And is this the Creature that must be wooed with so great earnestness? Behold all ye Inhabitants of the world, and admire! hear, O Heavens! this is she----- (I want a name to call her by) which thinks it below her to be match't to Christ, and an undervaluing to be acquainted with her Maker, and a shame to have God for her Father? From the Crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is nothing but wounds and bruises, and putrified sores; and running Plague-sores that are broken, are her greatest beauty: and here's a thing to be lov'd with all my heart! *Ezek.* 16. Whosoever thou art that readest these lines, this was once thy condition, in these ornaments he found thee; when God came to ask thy heart, this was thy dress, though thou art thus highly advanced. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed.

And after all this, O Sinner, art thou still as stout and proud as ever! Is Christ so willing to bring thee to his Father? is he willing to Cloath thee from head to foot with glorious Robes, such a dress as may become thee in the presence of a King? Doth he offer to lead thee in his hands to his own Palace? Is God so willing and desirous to be your Father, and Christ to be your Husband? are all the Ministers of Christ so willing to do their utmost to bring this match to perfection?

shall

shall they lie at you day and night to give your consent, and to be willing; and are you still unwilling? We, if all this signify little, and you miss of Christ at last, and be not acquainted with God after all, remember it was your own doings; and that you thought it greater Wisdom to marry the Servant than the Master, to obey the Rebell rather than your loving Prince. Remember you preferred Darknes before Light, Hell before Heaven. I call Heaven and Earth to Record this day, that I have set Life and Death before you, and you stand as if it were so difficult a matter to resolve which were the best. This sounds strangely, and every one will be ready to write *Fool* upon that mans Forehead that acts thus. Hold man, be not too ready to pass thy Censure before thou look within thee. Dost thou see an absolute need of Christ? Dost thou Adore his infinite love and kindness? Dost thou give up thy self to him for thy Lord, and receive him for better for worse, come on it what will? Or dost thou not rather spend thy thoughts, and let out thy Affections upon the Vanities and Pleasures of the World? Dost thou not Love Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, House and Lands, more than Him? Why, if this be thy case, I must say thou art one of the Fools that loves Death, and hatest Life, thou callest that Folly in another, which in thy self thou countest Wildom. I wonder who it is that you strive to please all this while! Is not the hand of *Joab* in all this? Hath not Satan been deep in regarding this Match? Hath not he a design to Marry thee to some painted Lust, though he undo thee for ever? And must he be pleased rather than God?

God?

Is it more necessary to gratifie him that never yet intended to do any of the Sons of *Adam* any kindness, rather than their best Friends? Come away for shame, and let us lose our breath no longer; and let that time we spend in pleading with you for God be spent in singing with you, and praising God for you, and congratulating your happy acquaintance with God, and you, matching to his only Son.

20. But because man is so wedded to the world, and dotes upon his lust, that all the arguments that we can use, are most commonly unsuccessful, I shall add one more upon this sort of motives drawn from the qualifications of him whom I would fain have you acquainted with, and that shall take in all that can be said on this head, and that is this: Consider that he is altogether lovely, he is made up of love, goodness, and all excellencies; and whatsoever pleasure, delight and content you find in the Creature, it is transcendently in him, he is the cheifest of ten thousands: ask of them that by Faith have seen him, inquire of the Spouse in the *Canticles*, and ask her what is her beloved more than another beloved? what there is in God and Christ more than in the world, and she will almost wonder, that any one that is rational should ask so foolish a question; she thinks you might with as much judgment and reason have ask'd, what there is in Heaven, more desirable than in Hell? What is there is in ease more than in torments? in Gold and Jewels, more than in dross; in a living, healthful, beautiful Creature, more than in a stinking rotten carcase? Did you but see his face, you would soon think there were something in
him

him more than in another ; could you but see his eye, your heart would be in a flame : did you but understand what it is to be brought into his banqueting-house, you would say that they are neither fools nor mad-men, that can find in their hearts to scorn the beauties and glories of this world in comparison of one look or smile from God ; and believe that his love was better than wine, to be Preferred infinitely before the greatest worldly pleasures, and think that the Virgins had reason enough to love him, *Cant.* 1. 4. How high doth the Church run in his commendations ? How doth she endeavour to set him out to the life, that every one may admire his excellencies, and be taken with his beauties as well as herself ; neither doth she fear to lose him by this, nor indeed is unwilling that others should fall in love with him as well as she, *Cant.* 5. 9. 10, &c. She begins first with his Face, it is white and ruddy, the most exact beauty, so that she must be blind that is not taken with him, and so she goes on as well as she can to set him out ; but he is so infinitely above her commendations, that she wants words to express her self, therefore she speaks one great one, *He is altogether lovely* ; and if you will not believe come and see. Do but look upon him by Faith and meditation, contemplate his beauties, and then if you have any thing yet to object, if after you have had a true sight of him, and have well weighed all, you do not find that there is in him, infinitely more than I can tell you, why then let me bear the blame for ever.

Well, now let us gather up all these things together ; and if a multitude of arguments, and if weight and reason, if vehemency and earnestness may

may prevail; I should have some good hopes that I should not want success in this work, nor you of the acquaintance with God, and everlasting glory. Therefore I say again, if kindness and love be taking who so sweet and obliging as he? If comfort, joy and pleasure be desirable, who is there when the Soul is surrounded with a multitude of perplexities that can so much delight, refresh and raise it? If Power, Glory, and Majesty, if ability to defend from injuries, and revenge, wrongs, might signify any thing with poor shuttless Creatures; who is there that ever yet prevailed against him? Who ever contended with God and prospered? If vigour, activity, and care in all the affairs of his friends can induce the dull helpless sinner to receive him; who will take more care for, and do more for them than he? If his humility may engage us, if freedom of access, notwithstanding that infinite distance that is between us and him, signify any thing as to the commending of him to our acquaintance; where can a poor begger be more welcome than at the house of this mighty Prince? Can Faithfulness in the greatest straight raise the esteem of a friend? who ever yet trusted him that was deceived? Are riches and wealth taking? Who is there that can give a Kingdom for a portion, a love-token, and give everlasting glory, and Heaven for a joynture, but God? Do his pity in misery, sympathy in suffering, compassion in distress, induce and commend a friend, who is more tender-hearted than he? Are Honours and Preferments such great things? Who is that which will make all his favourites Kings and Priests, and set them upon Thrones, and reward, and commend them

them before the wole World? is suitableness a
 considerable qualification to make up this match?
 who so suitable for the soul, a Spirit, as God
 a Spirit? Who can satisfie its vast and infinite
 desires, bnt infinity it self? Have poor simple
 Creatures that have quite undone themselves
 by their folly and indiscretion need of a wise
 Councillor, to wind them out of their sad in-
 tricacies? Who is there among the profound
 Politicians and grave sages of the world to be
 compared unto him? Doth a dying man that
 hath a never dying Soul, that is to pass speedily
 into an eternal state, lack an ever-dying and im-
 mortal Friend, that may stand him in some stead,
 when all his Relations are dead and rotten? is not
 God immortal? Are not friends sometimes fur-
 thest off from one, when one hath most need of
 them? Is not he then a friend highly to be prized,
 who can, who will never be absent? Doth not
 God fill Heaven and Earth? What think you of
 a Soul-friend? Is not such a one worth the look-
 ing after, who takes care that your Soul to be sure
 shall not miscarry? Who ever did more for Souls
 than Christ? will it not be true prudence to
 make sure of such a friend as we must have for our
 friend, or we are miserable for ever? and where
 is such a one to be found, but he that hath the
 keys of Heaven and Hell? which is most con-
 siderable, Time, or Eternity? And whom shall I
 most value, him that promiseth present pleasures
 that are lost as soon as felt or him that will be-
 stow everlasting favours? And are there not at
 Gods right hand pleasures for evermore? If the
 trial & experience of so many millions may speak
 his commendation, will not all that ever knew

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God

God say ; truly God is good to *Israel*. Will Gods willingness, desire and earnestness prevail with you to come to him ? What is the substance of the whole Bible ? Doth not almost every Chapter speak the desire that God hath to be reconciled to man ? if the perfection of all excellencies meeting in one can render him amiable ; how can he be slighted, who is altogether lovely ? And what say you now, are you resolved, or are you not ? Shall the infinite Majesty of Heaven condescend to offer himself to be loved and embraced by sinful dust ? shall God say, I will be thy Father ? and shall not the sinner say, I would be thy Child ? Why should not the heart of every Apostate rebellious Traytor, that hath forsieted Estate, Life and Soul, leap at such good news, and say, will God for all this lay aside the controversy, and conclude a Peace ? Will he receive the Rebell to Mercy ? will he open his Doors to his Prodigal ? And is there yet any hope ? Is it possible that such sins as mine should be forgiven ? Can it be conceived that such a Creature as I should be imbraced ? What look upon me, will God indeed take me into favour ? Yes, thee, behold he calls thee, he offers thee his Son, a Kingdom, a Crown ; behold the Father meets, he makes hast to meet his returning Prodigal ; Behold the King hath sent to invite thee to the Feast : Nay, he will give thee his only Son in Marriage, the wedding garment is made ready, the Bridegroom is coming, the wheels of his Chariot run apace, the friends of the Bridegroom are come to bid you make ready : up, deck your self, put on your glorious Apparel, make hast, make hast ye Virgins, your companions are ready, all stay for you

you, the Bridegroom is at the Door: Behold he is at the Door, and will you still let him knock? What! Father, Husband, a Kingdom? What words are these? Wilt thou O mighty *Jehovah*, be my Father? Wilt thou O blessed *Jesus* be my Husband? Shall I have a Kingdom? What, me a Child, a Spouse for the King of Glory, an Heir of Glory! Grace! Grace! *Amen Hallelujah*. Be it to thy servants according to thy Word! But who are we, and what is our Fathers house, that thou hast brought us hitherto? And now O Lord God, what shall thy servant say unto thee? For we are silenced with Wonder, and must sit down with Astonishment, for we cannot utter the least tittle of thy Praises? What meaneth the height of this strange love? O that the God of Heaven and Earth should condescend to enter into Covenant with his dust, and to take into his Bosom the viperous Brood, that have often spit their venom in his Face! We are not worthy to be as the handmaids to wash the feet of the servants of our Lord? How much less to be thy Sons and Heirs, and to be made partakers of all those blessed Liberties and Priviledges which thou hast settled upon us; But for thy goodness sake, and according to thy own Heart, hast thou done all these great things. *Even so Father, because it seemed good in thy sight. Wherefore thou art great. O God for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, and what Nation on Earth is like thy people, whom God went to Redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a Name, and to do for them great things and Terrible? For thou hast confirmed them to thy self, to be a People unto thee for ever, and thou Lord, art become their God.* *Wonder,*

O Heavens, and be moved O Earth, at this great thing! For, behold, the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Be astonished and ravished with Wonder; for the infinite Breach is made up, the Offender is received, and God and Man are reconciled, and a Covenant of Peace entered, and Heaven and Earth are agreed upon the Terms, and have struck their Hands, and sealed the Indentures! O happy Conclusion! O blessed Conjunction! Shall the Stars dwell with the Dust? Or the wide distant Poles be brought to mutual Embraces and Cohabitation? But here the distance of the Terms is infinitely greater, *Rejoyce O Angels! shout O Seraphims!* O all the Friends of the Bridegroom and Bride, prepare an *Epithalamium*, be ready with the Marriage-Song. Lo, here is the wonder of Wonders! For *Jehovah* hath betrothed himself for ever to his hopeless Captives, and owns the Marriage before all the World; and is become one with us, and we with Him: He hath bequeathed to us the precious things of the Earth beneath, with the fulness thereof; and hath kept back nothing from us. And now, O Lord, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy Servants, and hast left us nothing to ask at thy Hands, but what thou hast already freely granted. Only the Word which thou hast spoken concerning thy Servants, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said, and let thy Name be magnified for ever, saying, *The Lord of Hosts, he is the God of Israel. Amen. Hallelujah.* And how do you like this Musick, O ye the lost Sons and Daughters of *Adam*? How do you relish these

these Dainties ? what do you think of this Match? Some you see have been so wise, as with the greatest Gratitude they can for their Souls, to close with those happy offers of Grace. You hear how bravely such and such have bestowed themselves, and now they are made for ever. And what do you say to the same Proposals ? Have they so much Reason to bless the day that ever such a Motion was made ? have they cause to rejoyce for ever for those blessed Overtures, or are they all to be slighted by you ? Will Christ be worse to you than them ! Is Heaven and Happinels less necessary for you than them ? Will the loss of a Soul be more inconsiderable to you, than it would have been to them ? Will not Heaven, Christ, and Glory, be as well worth your acceptance as theirs ? What, are you willing to be shut out when the Bridegroom comes to fetch his Spouse home : Can you bear it, to see such, as you thought your inferiours, advanced, and your self despised ? What shall I say ? What words shall I use ? What shall I do to prevail ? O that I could pity you a thousand times more than I do ! O that my Eyes might weep in secret for thy Folly ! O that you also might do as some have done before you ? though indeed they be but few that be so wise ? O that you would also bestow your Heart upon Christ ! give him your heart-love ; or he will have your heart-bloud. Do not make your self miserable to please any living : Do not slight Christ because most do so ; go not with them to Hell for company. But that, if it be possible, I might perswade you, I shall add some more motives, to prevail with you to get acquainted with God ; which I am certain will either work that

bleſſed effects, or riſe up againſt you to the aggravation of your Confuſion, in that great and terrible Day.

II. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of Motives which I ſhall inſiſt upon, for the inforcing of this Duty of Acquainting your ſelves with God, I ſhall take from the glorious Effect of this Acquaintance with God.

The firſt Effect of this Acquaintance with God is, it makes the ſoul humble, and conſequently fits the ſoul for greater Communications from God ſtill, and to do God the greater Service; but of that particular afterwards. Acquaintance with God, it makes the Soul humble. When God comes into the Soul, he brings ſuch a glorious Light along with him, that he makes the Soul to ſee, not only his Beauty, but its own deformity, *Pſal. 119. 130. The entrance of thy Word giveth Light: It giveth Underſtanding to the ſimple.* Before the Soul was acquainted with the Word of God, and by that had ſome discoveries of God made to it out of the Word, why it was in the dark, and ſaw nothing at all of its own Vileness, it took no notice of that Sink, that Hell that was within it, conſider not its own Treason againſt the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and the dangerous hazards that it did run every moment upon that account; but the Soul thought very well of its own State, it flattered it ſelf in its own iniquity, the man thinks he is Rich and increaſed in Goods, and hath need of nothing, but when he comes to look into his Purſe, to open his

Treasury, and to tell over all his Gold and Silver in the light, Why then he perceives a sad mistake: All his Silver is Drossie, and the best Riches that he hath is but Dung: When the Light comes in, he sees the Darkness of his Understanding, the perverseness of his Will, the disorderliness of his Affections, the distemper of the whole Soul. He before took himself for a beautiful Creature, but by his Light and this Glas he sees his Beauty is great Deformity, he beholds heaps of Lusts crawling up and down, which before lay undiscerned, and then that man that reckoned himself so happy, cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? What shall I do to be Saved?* I am undone, undone, how shall I live, where shall I dwell for ever? Time was that the man admired what the Ministers ailed to keep such a stir about sin, but now he wonders that they are no more earnest in their Preaching of it down. It was a little while ago, that he thought himself whole, but now he feels himself sick to the very heart, Wounded, Fainting, and ready to Die; he made full account that he was Pure, but now he cries out unclean, unclean; it was not long since he said with Indignation, and I blind also? But now he cries out, and will not be silenced, have mercy upon me *Jesus*, thou Son of *David*, and grant that I may receive my Sight. His Language is much altered; he cannot say, was ever such a sinner as I pardoned? Will such a Prodigal ever be received? Shall such foul Offences as mine be forgiven? If God should look upon me, and give me a Christ, and pity me, and cast his Skirts over me, while I lie in my Blood: if the Lord should look upon me, it would be such a wonder

that all that ever heard of it may justly admire. Now the man which thought himself the best of Saints, believes himself as bad as the worst of sinners! When a man begins to be acquainted with God, he begins also to know himself; He that saw no need of washing by Christ, would now have Hands, Feet, Head and Heart all Washed. He that thought himself sometimes far enough from Hell, now begins to admire that he did not fall into it and although there be sweet alteration in him for the better, and Saints begin to delight very much in him, yet he wonders that any one should see any thing in him, that should cause any affection in them towards him, much more to inflame their hearts in such vehement love to him; if he hear of any Reproaches that are cast upon him, he is ready to say with that wise Stoick, (*Epict*) *If he had known me better, he would have spoke much worse of me. If any praise him, he judgeth that it proceeds from their Ignorance of his weaknes, rather than from any knowledge of his Worth; and if he hear any such Language, he is ready to tremble for fear of his own Heart, and cry out, not unto me, not unto me, but unto his Name be the Praise; Yet not I, but Christ which dwelleth in me.* Thus it is with one that begins to have some saving knowledge of God; and the nearer he comes to God, the further he goes from himself; the more he sees of him and his Righteousness, the less he sees of his own; the more he is Exalted; the more he debaseth himself; like those four and twenty Elders, he lays his Crown at the feet of God. Thus it was with Job, when God, as I may say, stood at a great distance from him, he is ready to speak a little too highly, he stands much upon his

his own Righteousness, he stily justifieth himself; but when the holy God comes a little nearer to him, when he throws off that dark cloud with which he had mantled himself, and when he caused that glorious Brightness to break forth upon *Job*, and made him to see a glance of his Holiness, Wisdom and Justice, then how is he even ashamed and confounded within himself, that he should ever stand so much upon his own justification, *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the Ear: But now mine Eye seeth thee, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* When he comes to be better acquainted with God, how strangely is his Note changed; and I might say, when he was thus abased, how speedily doth God raise him to a Wonder! A man may hear of God twenty years together, and yet never abhor himself with dust and ashes, never see any vileness that is in his Nature, never be brought off from his own Righteousness, never admire that he is kept out of Hell! O but when he comes to see God, and to be acquainted with him, how doth he cry out of himself as unworthy to breath in the Air, as deserving nothing but Wrath; then he hath not a word to say for the goodness of his own Heart, now he can say with Astonishment, O infinit Patience! O unmeasurable Goodness! O the depths of Gods love! He must be merciful indeed that can pardon such sins! That must be goodness indeed that can be so to me! That is love with a witness, that can imbrace such a loathsome Monster! What was it that made *Abraham* call himself Dust and Ashes? What made *David* to say he was a Worm and no man? What made *Isaiah* speak so debasingly of himself; Why these were the friends;

Friends of God, they had Visions of that holy One. When is it that the People of God are most ingenuous in their Confessions ? When do they most freely pour out their Soul before God ? when is it that they most readily open their Sores, and desire that they should be searched, but when this great Chyrurgion comes to their Chambers ? Those which before were whole, are now sick full of Plague-Sores, Head and Heart sick, dangerously Sick, and no whole part in them ; they can say more against themselves now than ever the Minister could ; they can aggravate their Sins, and lay loads upon themselves ; and they see themselves Vile, and even are ready to wonder that are Earth did not open and swallow them up before this ; they admire that God should indure them so long, and think it no small Miracle that they were not crushed in the Egge, that they were not cast from the darkness of the Womb, to the darkness of Hell. Now they can cry out of Original Sin, and the indisposition of their souls to any thing that is good, and inclination to that which is bad : They say as well as *David, That they were born in sin, and in iniquity did their Mother conceive them ;* They think every thing too good for them, all mercy on this side everlasting Misery. They count every bit they Eat, and every drop they Drink, more than they deserve. They think themselves unworthy of the least of Gods Mercies, *Gen. 32. 10.* Others say thanksgivings, but he feels them ; others say Confessions, but feels them. It is one thing for a man to speak of his own unworthiness, and another thing to lie under the sense of it. The heart and Tongue are two distinct Members. The heart may

may speak that which the Tongue can't utter, and the Tongue may utter that which the heart never felt. But a man that is brought into acquaintance with God, speaks what he experiences, or rather his experience is greater than he speaks, so that he doth not dissemble with God, when he confesseth his sin before him. They lay themselves as low as Hell; this is humility, and this is an effect of acquaintance with God. Hence it is that *Paul* saith of himself, *Eph. 3. 8. Unto me who am less than the least of all Saints is this Grace given, that I should Preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship, &c.* He wans words to expresse Gods greatness, and his own smallness. Now, what was it that made *Paul* speak and think thus of himself? There was a time when *Paul* would have spit in any ones face that should have spoke as much against him, as he did against himself. What is it that hath wrought such a strange alteration in this great *Rabby*, and made him so little? Why, this Acquaintance with God, the sight of Christ was the thing that laid this proud Pharisee in the Dust, and made him blind also. Mark this, always the more heavenly any Man is, the more Humble. See *Exod. 3. 11. 2 Sam. 7. 18.* If I should appeal to the experiences of Saints, and ask them, when they had the lowest thoughts of themselves; would they not say, when they were nearest God? Now, would you walk humbly? you must walk with your God; would you see more of your own Deformity? why then you must labour to see more of his Holiness, more of his Beauty. Contraries set neer one another, appear more visible.

2. Another excellent Effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man fall upon sin in good earnest. When the soul sees how infinitely good God is, it can't but see an unspeakable evil in sin, which is so directly contrary to him. When the Soul hath really entred into a League with God, it presently bids defiance to all his Enemies; when he begins to be at peace with God, he presently commenceth a War against his Adversaries. Friendship with God makes Enmity against Satan. That which formerly the man rould under his Tongue as a sweet Morfel, is now like Gall and Wormwood to him. He that sometimes did commit Iniquity with greediness, can now say, that it is the greatest Folly and madness in the world; he knows that it is an evil and a bitter thing, as sweet as it tasted when his Palate was distempered; he that gloried in his Wickedness, now accounts it the greatest shame in the world; and hateth the Garments which are bespotted with the Flesh, which sometimes he took for beautiful Raiments. The burnt Child Dreads the Fire; Sin hath cost his Friend dear, and him dear too. The Child can't love that Knife which stabb'd his Father. He knows how sweet God is, and how much he hates sin, and that if he would have Gods Company, he must bid an everlasting farewell to his dearest beloved sin; and therefore rather than he will offend so dear a Friend, he will hew *Agag* in pieces before the Lord. He will as soon cut off one Hand with the other, and be pull'd Limb from Limb, as again draw his Sword against his covenanted friend, and again venture into the Field in the Cause that sometimes he did so deeply engage body and soul in.

in. He that thought before that it was no great matter to Damn, Curse, and Tear; but a trick of youth to Whore, and no harm to do what one had a mind to; to Eat and Drink, and Talk, and sleep as one Lists, to give ones Lusts whatsoever it call'd for; he that could once make a mock of sin, and Sleep securely upon the top of a mast, and thought it a piece of Gallantry to dare the Almighty, and was ready to laugh at them which durst not be so Prodigal of their Souls, as himself; the case is now wonderfully altered with him, he now sees the Harlot stript naked, he beholds how loathsome the Whore is, now her Paint is washed off, sin and hell are alike to him; tempt him to folly, and he will soon answer in *Josephs* language, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* He that sometimes thought sin the only pleasure, and looked upon the Devil and the world as the only Friends, now sees his dangerous mistake, and blesteth God that his Eyes are opened before he comes into another world; he knows how that holiness is the only pleasure, and God is the only Friend; and sin and the world are as mortal Enemies as the Devil himself; he believes that if he venture upon sin, he must venture upon the displeasure of his Friend, whose favour he sets more store by than all the delights under Heaven, and whose loving kindness he judgeth to be better than Life it self. When the Soul is once acquainted with God, how strangely are its apprehensions of things altered? Now he calls Things and Persons by their right Name; good he calls Good, and evil Evil; whereas before he called evil good, and good evil,

evil, and put light for darkness, and darkness for Light; he now believes that the zealous compassionate Ministers that spoke so much against sin, had reason enough to have said ten times as much as they did; he sees that it was not for nothing that they were so earnest with him; he hath tasted the Gall, Wormwood, and Poison that is in sin; he plainly sees what is the great Makebate between God and Man, he hath now the wit to understand what it is that hath kept good things so long from him: Tell him now of a Revel, a Whore, he had as live thou shouldst perswade him to part with his strength and liberty and grind in a Mill, he reckons you might as rationally desire him to leap into a botomless Pit, to take up his everlasting lodging in a bed of Flames, and to make light of Damnation. Let Men and Devils use what Arguments they will to prevail with him, now to close with temptations, he is sure he hath a stronger against them; he hath a sensible Argument within, which will answer all, If they had ten thousand times as many more than they can produce? The love of Christ makes him abhor the motion; God is my Friend, dashes all. Shall such a one as I take up Arms against God? Shall I that have found him so infinitely good? Shall I that have experienced the faithfullness of this Friend to me, be so infinitely ungratefull, as to be thus abominably unfaithfull to him? Shall I that have forfeited my Life, and Soul, and instead of Hell have received Heaven, instead of Damnation, Salvation, shall I instead of thankfullness again rebell? because the Grace of God abounds, shall sin abound? God forbid. To argue from mercy to sin is the Devils

vils logick : To argue from mercy to duty is true Christianity : One that is acquainted with God, can expostulate the case with his own Soul, and say, What meanest thou O my Soul to stand parlying with Satan ? Hast thou known what that hath coit thee already ? look back to *Eden*. Who was it that dispossessed thy Grand-Father of that brave seat ? What did *Eve* get by discoursing with such a Cheater ; have you not lost enough already, but you must be venturing still ? Was it nothing for God of a friend to become a stranger and Enemy ? Was it a slight matter to be divested of all that glory that once thou didst shine in, but that now again after thou art brought into some favour, thou must be tampering with that gamester who had like to have robbed thee of all ? Art thou talking of returning again into *Egypt* ? What, hast thou so soon forgotten the Iron, and the Clay ? Is this all the thanks that you give the Lord for his unspeakable mercy ? Doth he that hath done such things for you deserve no better at your hands ? Is this your kindness to your friend ? What was it O my Soul that that undone Creature said unto thee ? Did he say, it is a little one, and thy Soul shall live ? What, did he ask a few merry hours that I should spare my self, that I should not be righteous overmuch ? Did he so. A special Friend ! I thank you for nothing ? And why didst thou not answer the Tempter as *Solomon* did *Bathsheba*, when she ask'd a small thing (as she thought) for *Adonijah* ? and why dost thou not ask the Kingdom also ? And why did not Satan ask thee to part with Heaven, and thy interest in Christ, and those Favours ? as the Lord liveth, as small a request as thou thinkest his was, that

that word was spoken against thy life, thy soul. *A virtuous Man*, or as the Stoick calls him, (*Anton.*) *One that hath God for his Friend; when Temptations are presented, he remembers who he is, and how he stands related to God, and how little grateful such an action would be to his Friend.* And thus he doth resist the Temptation with a great deal of gallantry, when he remembers himself. Nay, sometimes, Temptations to sin do make Grace more to abound: the water which was intended to cool divine Love, proves Oyl, and makes that noble flame to burn more vehemently, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7. He desires to exercise that Grace which is contrary to the vice which he is tempted to with more than ordinary vigour. He stands like a Rock in the midst of the sea unshaken; he is steadfast and unmoveable, like a pillar in the Temple of his God. He is much of the same mind, in that point, what that brave Heathen, who spake thus to himself when Temptation was strong. (*Ar. Epict.* l. 2. c. 18.) *Deliberate man, yield not rashly, 'tis a great work that lies upon thy hands, 'tis a divine work, 'tis for a Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.* Now remember thy God, lets see what thy love to thy God is, remember his presence, he beholds how thou standest deliberating whether thou shouldst fight for him or against him; for shame shew not thy self so basely disingenious: Remember what thy God, thy Friend, did for thee at such and such a time: Remember how kind your were entertained by him the last time your were at his House. Whose sword 'tis that you wear by your side? who gave you it? Did not God give it you to fight against his enemies? And will you draw it against himself? remember from whence you had all that

that you do enjoy, and can you find in your heart to take Gods mercies, Gold, Silver, and Food, and bestow them all upon that which he hates? will you quarter and keep in pay with Gods coyn, his greatest enemy? And if you feel your heart still staggering, and scarce able to keep it's ground, then remember God stands by, Christ looks on, and sees how gallantly any Champion of his will demean themselves on his quarrel; and that there is not a more lovely fight upon the Earth, than to behold one of his Friends, rather venturing their lives than they will bear, that the least indignity or affront should be put upon their God! O happy are they that can always act as in the sight of God! and if the Soul can have but a constant fresh scence of it's relation to God, and his eye, it is impossible but that it should hate sin, which is so directly opposite to him: happy are those who by the thoughts of God are intraged against sin? Is it not enough faith that heavenly Soul that is acquainted with God, that I have done such and such things against God, when I knew him not, but that I should again engage against him after I have been obliged by a thousand mercies, after I have tasted and seen how good the Lord is? is it a light matter that I did so long after fight against him then? & shall I now renew my rebellions, when I have had so much experience of the folly and madness of such a war, where I shall be as surely conquered as I draw my sword? and hath God kept me by a miracle of mercy out of Hell, and after I had run out so wretchedly, and undone my self, set me up again, after I had plaid the prodigal, received me again into favour, and shall I after all deal thus

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basely

basely by him : No Ple die a thousand deaths
 before I will willingly yield to any thing that
 may be in the least offensive to him, whom my
 Soul hath such an infinite reason to love above
 the whole world. The knowledge of Gods ser-
 vice, and Satans too, makes a Soul to distinguish ;
 he that knows what it is to be made free by Christ,
 abhors his old Master, he remembers full well
 the great hardship that he then under-went,
 when he had nothing to live upon but Husks,
 he calls to mind the Clay and Morter, he can't
 forget the cruel Vassalage that he served under ;
 Garlick and Onions were his dainties, and truly
 he can't desire to leave his Manna for such kind
 of Food ; he is not in love with the Whip and
 Scourge, he doth not dote upon the fatters, the
 Iron which went into his soul, but he is glad
 with all his heart to be free from those Task-ma-
 sters, which made him to serve with rigour ; he
 hath no mind to return to his old Work : My
 meaning in all this is, he that was a servant, and
 a drudge of Satans, and a slave to his lust, when he
 once comes to taste the sweetness of spiritual li-
 berty, to be made free by Christ, he hath no desire
 again to be inflaved, but doth with the greatest
 detestation, reject all the proposals and pro-
 mises that the Devil makes, to bring this business
 about ; he knows Satan too well to love his ser-
 vice, he remembers that all his pay was promises,
 and no more, he remembers that he fed him
 with poyson, and made him do that which had
 like to break his bones, and undone him for ever ;
 he sees what Satans designs were, and what had
 become of him quickly, if he had gone on in his
 service ; he believes chains to be chains, though
 they

they be of Gold ; believes that poyson will kill him, though it may be sweet in the mouth ; he hath now such a sence of the evil and baseness of sin, as being so infinitely loathsome to God, that he hates it with a perfect hatred ; he hath a will in some measure conformed to the will of God ; and what his friend, the Lord loves, he can't hate ; and where his God hates he can't love. *Psal. 139. 22. Do not I hate them O Lord which hate thee ? and am I not grieved with them which rise up against thee ? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* Now what is it that stirs the Psalmists choller so much ? Why, he had been working upon his own heart, in the former part of the Psalm, the doctrine of Gods omniscieny and goodness, and by meditation upon this subject he was brought under a lively sence of the greatness of Divine kindness ; and while his heart did thus muse the fire burnt, his soul was in a flame against sin, *verse 17. How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God !* O when the soul hath sweet thoughts of God, it will have sower thoughts of sin. When the soul loves God dearly, it can't chuse but hate sin entirely. None behold such deformity in sin, as those which behold most beauty in God. Hence it is that some of the people of God have (nay all of them which are really acquainted with God are of the same mind) counted it more desirable to leap in the flames, then to venture upon a known sin. It was no untruth in the absolute position, though falsely applyed by *Job's* friend, that it is a great wickedness to choose the least sin before the greatest suffering, *Job 36. 21.* What was it that made *Paul* so weary of himself ?

what burden was it that made his back so ake? what pains causeth those bitter groans? *Rom. 7.* was it not sin? and why did not *Paul* groan before as well as then? was it because he then had no sin at all? or less sin then when he made that bitter complaint? no such matter, but because he had then less acquaintance with God. But now he is become acquainted with God, the more he doth abhor himself for sin. He now knows better than he did, his eyes are opened, and he sees sin in its colours, and he looks upon it as so great an evil, that he doth want words to express the odious nature of it; therefore because he can't find a worse word, he calls sin by its own name, *Sinfull Sin*; which he thought a more significant Epithete, than if he had called it *Devillish Sin*. What makes the Children of God to be so weary of this world, and so desirous to be upon the wing? why it is because of better acquaintance elsewhere? they know that then they shall put off that carrion that now they carry about with them; Sin I mean, which like a dead carcase bound to a living, doth now stink so abominably in their nostrils; they know that then they shall have a sweeter smell, and themselves also smell more savoury in the nostrils of God. They know that poverty shall be swallowed up with riches, want with fullness, sin with holiness, misery with happiness, they have an inheritance, a City, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and nothing that is unclean shall enter into it; and when they come thither, they know the case will be altered with them, and that though now they bear about with them a body of death and sin, yet then they shall have a body as pure, as bright
and

and glorious as the Sun, they shall be presented by Christ to the Father without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. He knows that as long as he is thus sullied by his sin, his great friend will not take so much pleasure in his company. *isaac* and *Ishmael*, the *Ark* and *Dagon*, God and Sin can't dwell in the same heart; therefore he desires to have less of sins company that he may have more of Gods; none of sins company, that he may have always Gods company. Observe that constantly in your own experience and others, those which walk most close with God are most tender, as to the matter of sin; and those which are less in converse with God, are more bold in their venturing upon sin, and after it is committed they have less regret. What is the reason that one can swallow any thing almost, and another is afraid of the least appearance of evil; he hates the garment spotted with the flesh, he is as fearful of cloathing himself with wickedness, as of putting on the garments of one that hath had the Leprosie or Plague upon him; he hates vain thoughts, because he loves God and his Laws, *Psal.* 119. 104, 113.

3. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it makes one to have very low and undervaluing thoughts of the world. When the Saint hath been with *Paul* raised up to the third Heaven, when he hath had some intimate converse with God, he can look the world into almost nothing; nay, if it stand in competition with Christ, he counts it but as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. he can then set a higher value upon the light of Gods coun-

tenance, then upon Cern, and Wine, and Oyl. It is because that poor Creatures know no better, that they dote so much upon the world; did they but know what it is to have one look of love from God, were they but acquainted with the glory of another world, they would soon disrelish every thing else; nothing will down with them which have been feasted in Gods House, but those Royal dainties. Taste the world who will, saith the Saint, give me but more Grace, more of Christs company, let me but maintain an intimate familiarity with God, let me be but better acquainted with him, and be more frequently refreshed with his smiles; this is all that I desire upon earth, this is all that I expect to make my happiness compleat in Heaven. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I can desire in comparison of thee.* It was not without good reason that the Psalmist prizes the Commands of God above Gold and Silver; it was no mistake in Solomon to count Wisdom more excellent than the finest Gold, and more precious than Rubies. That spiritual Merchant knew what he did when he sold all that he had for that Pearl of great price; he was sure he should be no loser by such a bargain. Bring me a heavenly Creature that hath had a view by Faith, of the Glory of Gods countenance, that hath been in his company, that hath been brought into his Banqueting-house, such a one I am confident can easily spare that which most keep such a fearful stir about, he can spare the world for them which are like to have no better a portion. Give him but more of those spiritual pleasures which he hath had in communion with God, and he desires no more.

He can now speak it, and speak it in good earnest, that there is no comparison between this world and another; he can now call this world a shadow, and the glory of it grass, and write Vanity, Emptiness, and Vexation upon its beautiful Face, and condemn all its smiles and frowns, and look upon its greatest Lovers, as persons that deserve to be pittied rather than envied, whose portion is so small, whose happiness so short, and whose misery and mistake is so great and dismal. It is a common thing for men to declaim against the world, and to say, it is but a little muck; it's no unusual thing for its greatest Lovers to speak against it, and say, that it is that which passeth away; but yet for all that they pursue it more than Heaven, and are more earnest for it, than the Salvation of their Souls, and more troubled at the thought of parting with it, than at the thought of their parting with God; and the loss of it troubles them more than if we tell them of the loss of their souls: Such as these will not say, but that God is infinitely more to be loved than the whole world; but yet if the World and God stand in competition, they stand not long disputing which must give place, the World hath the uppermost room in the heart. But whence is this mistake? how comes the Servant to Ride, and the Master to go on foot? Why is the world preferred before God? Why hence it is, men know not God, they are not acquainted with his excellency; the World is sensible, he sees it, he feels it, he tastes it, and so he doth not the things that are invisible: And no wonder then that sense bears the sway; thy man wants Faith to realize invisibles, he wants senses spiritually

exercised. But now he that knows God, and is acquainted with spiritual things, he hath quite another apprehension of the World; and that not only from Faith, but sometimes from a spiritual sense, and he can say that Divine Pleasures, Riches, and Enjoyments do as sensibly refresh him, yea, abundantly more than ever the world did. And when he hath been newly taking a walk in that heavenly Paradise, he looks back upon this World with grief and indignation, that he should ever love the world with his heart, when there was one that did infinitely more deserve his love, when there was a God, Christ, and Holiness to be loved; that he should be such a child, such a fool as to run after Butterflies, quarrel for a feather, hunt for a shadow, while God, Christ, and Glory, those great Substances lay by unregarded. Now he grudges that any thing should have his love but his God; his dearest Relations, if they stand in Gods way, must be run over, despised, hated. That which the men of the world fight, and kill, and spare not to damn their souls for, he sees now to be a pitiful worthless thing, which can't defer Death a Moment, nor stand him in any stead in another world. He is all for that coyn which will go currant in another Country; and if he be but rich in promises, rich in spiritual relations, rich in grace, he takes himself for no unhappy man; let the world speak or think what they will of him, he doth not much pass upon it, he believes that he is but a pilgrim and stranger here, and if he meet with no great kindness, it is but that which he expected. The truth of it is, he is almost afraid of the smiles of the world, not being ignorant of this, that

that whom it kisses, it intends to betray; he can't be overfond of that which in all probability will keep God and him at a greater distance, and make his passage to glory next to impossible. He reckons that it's better being rich in grace, than rich in purse; and that he which lays up for his body, and provides not for his soul, is the greatest fool in the world. Tell such a one as *Moses* of riches, honours, and preferments, he thinks them but poor sorry things for a man of *Isaac* to be taken with, and he will rather see them in the dirt, than part company with his suffering brethren, much less with God. It is storied of *Anaxagoras*, that he seemed to be very little concerned when his country was in a flame; upon which being taxed by some, he made this reply, *There is none of you all care more for your country than I do for mine*; pointing with his finger up to heaven. Thus it is with the people of God; let others talk of Riches and Honour, but there is none of them all do value true Riches as they do; but here's the difference, one thinks he hath Riches when he hath the command of a great deal of Gold and Silver; the other knows, he hath Riches when he hath Christ, and Grace, and can have good returns out of that other World. And which of these are the wisest will ere long be seen. One looks upon heaven and glory as a shadow, a fable; and the things of this World, as the only realities; the other he looks upon Heaven, God and Eternity, as the greatest realities, and most worthy of his highest valuation, and the things of this world as flying shadows, which can't fill the arms of him that doth embrace them: And under this apprehension, and
sense

sence of things, no marvel that he doth prefer the substance before the shadow. He believes with that Worthy, that he was born for other things than to eat and drink, and sleep, or to take his pleasure, or to get an estate; he knows that the business in this world, is to provide for another, to get his peace made with God, to contemplate Heaven, and to get thither; and therefore you must not count it strange, that such a person as this is somewhat cold, and remiss in his carrying on of lower designs; he knows that the disproportion between Finite and Infinite, Times and Eternity, is no such Inconsiderable one as the most count upon. Again, he hath more than once experienced this, that the very joys and comforts that are to be had in the enjoying of Communion with God, even in this world, are unspeakably more intence and refreshing, than the highest sensual pleasures in the world. One that is acquainted with God, will take the word of his Friend for true, which word tells him, that whatsoever is presented to his sense, the world and all that is therein, must ere long be burnt up; whereupon he thinks it no imprudence at all to hazard present enjoyments for future hopes; no folly to look after something that will bear the flame. He thinks it scarce worth the while to be born to possess, if it were a whole world, except he were sure of having something after it that were better than what he met with here; he had rather have one smile from his friend, than thousands of Gold and Silver: he would not for a world be to have his portion here, though it be never so large a one: he had rather by far be with *Lazarus* upon a dunghil, than sit with *Dives* in a chair of State,

State, before the richest fare that the Sea, or Air, or Earth could afford him : he would not change conditions with those which enjoy the most of the things of this world : He can thankfully want that which most commonly makes its possessors miserable. O could you but talk with a man that lives in Heaven while he is upon earth, and could you but see and hear how much he flights that which you adore ! Give me neither poverty nor riches, but Food convenient for me is the highest that he dare pray for : he had rather live in a smoaking Cottage, and have God for his companion, than dwell in the greatest palace, and have the Devil for his Neighbour, Counsellor, and Master. When a man hath been in Heaven by contemplation, though his body be upon the Earth, yet the best part of him, his affection, his love, joy, and heart, is still there. *Sen. Ep. 41. One that doth converse with God here, he is indeed that earthly lump, his body is below, but could you see his thoughts, could you look into his heart, and see the inward workings of his soul, you should see the man out of the world discoursing with God, he sticks close to the company of his Friend : He is like the Sun-beams, who though they reach the earth, yet they still abide there from whence they are sent, and are most intensely hot nearest the fountain, the Sun. So the soul and thoughts of a child of God, they may, nay, they can't but glance upon the world : but it's most vigorous spriteful workings are towards God, and the heat of its affections are abundantly more remiss and cold when they beat upon earthly objects. He that knows what it is to have the company of God, is almost ready to wonder how any one can be content with any thing below God : and as for himself,*

himself, he takes himself for little better than a prisoner, while his soul is pent up in a body which is so unwieldy as to all spiritual employments, till it be refined by the grave. He would not be to dwell here for ever, for a world, though he might enjoy more content than ever any since the fall did. A Soul acquainted with God is a noble Creature indeed, it scorns petty low things, it thinks no Estate big enough for it, but that which is infinite ; he looks upon himself as a Citizen of no mean City, a Denizen of *Zion*, a Free-man of the *New-Jerusalem*, one of the Royal Society, over which Christ, that King of Glory, is the President ; his inheritance is greater than that which the Sun compasseth in its course. O when (saith such a one) shall I leave these Cities of *Cabul*, and dwell with the King at *Jerusalem* ! O when shall my soul be safely ark'd ! O when shall I be upon the wing for Heaven ! O when shall I leave this body there whence it first came ! When shall I go out of this cell, this Cage ! O that I were once safe in Heaven ! O that I were in the immediate presence of God, and might stand for ever before him, and have his blessed society for ever and ever. Neither am I now quite without him ; but how little, O how little is it that now I enjoy ! O when shall I enter into the possession of that better longer life ! I stay and long for that separating, or rather uniting hour, which will separate my soul from my body, from my dross, but perfectly unite me to God. Look then O my Soul, upon all that thou seest below, but as so many Inns and resting-places for a Pilgrim to take some little refreshment in, and then to be gone. That day, O my fearful
Soul,

Soul, which thou sometimes fearest as my last, is the-birth day of eternity. O what mean we to love our prisons, fetters, burdens? What ail we to be so much pleas'd with our miseries, and afraid of our happiness? O this unbelief! O were Christians but more in the company of God by Faith and Meditation, they would look upon God as great, and the world as a very small thing. He that knows God to be great, sees every thing below him little. It is an insupportable argument of a Divine and Excellent Soul, and one that hath Acquaintance with God, when he can judge all beneath God, as low, sordid, base, and utterly unworthy of the respect of his soul.

4. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it will ease us of all sorrows, or cure all sorrows. As soon as any one hath but a saving knowledge of Christ, he is in such a condition as that he need not trouble his head with care, nor his heart with fear; no more than a rich Heir that hath a tender-hearted, loving, wise Father, need not trouble himself what he shall do for bread and cloathing: as long as the great cause of fear is taken away, so long he is well enough. As for those that are unacquainted with God, they either are always afraid, or have cause always to be afraid: but as for a Child of God, that Scripture buoys up his Soul under the mightiest ways of fear, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1.* He that is in Covenant with God, may in this world undergo some petty injuries, some insurrection may be made against him; but this is his comfort, he is sure never to be quite over-powered, never to be finally conquered! O the disquietments and fears

fears that strangers and enemies are compassed with, or will be ! And O the joys, the security, the true security that some have ; at what a rate do they live ! and how bravely do they die ! mark the perfect, and behold the upright man ; for the end of that man is peace. This was touched upon, before, when I opened the nature and qualifications of this friend, and therefore I need say the less here ; yet it being the great inquiry of the wisest, how they may be sheltered from this storm ; What shall they do to be cured of these heart-qualms ? how they may be freed from fears ? I shall not altogether pass it over in this place. I can't but encourage poor strangers, as they value the truest comforts, as they would be free from fear and trembling when the Foundations of the Earth shall be shaken, when the Mountains shall tremble, and melt at the presence of God, the mighty God of *Jacob* ; when the Heavens shall be rouled together as a Scroul, and be all of a Flame. Make sure of this Friend ! it is impossible that one that hath such a one for his friend should much be daunted, when he hears of Wars, and Rumors of Wars, when the Pestilence rages, when there are dreadful Earth-quakes in sundry places, and such distresses of Nations and perplexities, that the stoutest heart shall sink that hath not this to support : Then a Child of God may lift up his head with comfort, because his redemption draweth near. There is a vast difference between a godly man and a wicked, as to their affections, fears, joys, desires, hope. The godly thinks long for that, which the wicked wishes withall his heart might never be ; the Day of Judgment. The
righteous

righteous man is even delighted with the forethoughts of that, the thoughts of which doth put a damp upon all the comforts of the ungodly ; he rejoyceth in that which makes his Neighbour to tremble. As for death, a gracious heart that hath kept his watch, and maintained a sweet & constant Correspondency with God, and hath had his heart in heaven, and can look upon the great *Jehovah* as his friend, can't be very much affrighted at his approach : He is not much appaled, when he looks out at the window, and sees this messenger making haste to his house ; and when he knocks at his door he dares let him in, and can heartily bid him welcome ; he understands whence he comes, and what his errand is, and though he look somewhat grimly, yet as long as he comes to conduct him to his friends house, he can dispence with that : he hath more reason to speak it than he which did. (*Plotinus*) *Let me make haste away to my Country ; there are my excellent Ancestors, there dwell my noble Relations, there is the constant residence of my dearest Friends.* (*Tull.*) *O happy will that day be when I shall come into that glorious assembly, when I shall have better company then Homer, Orpheus, Socrates, Cato, when I shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac. & Jacob, in the Palace of their Friend and mine ! O happy day when I shall come to my Fathers house, in that general Assembly, the Church of the First-born, to an innumerable company of Angels, to Jesus, the Mediator of thy New Covenant, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.* A mans knowledge of other things may add to his fears, and make his miseries greater : But the more knowledge we have of God, the less our fears and sorrows must needs be : and when our knowledge
of

of God is perfect, all our fears and sorrow shall be for ever blown over. I can't omit a brave speech of that noble Stoick which comes to my mind, *Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 7.* (*If the acquaintance and favour of Cæsar can keep you (as you are made to believe) from some fears? how much rather to have God for your Father and Friend? how little cause have such to be afraid at any time at any thing, Death it self is not evil to a friend of God: he may say, come, let us go quickly to our Fathers house, our Father calls us.* And doth this seem a small matter to you; believe it, when you come to dye, you will be of another minde then: you will think that's a cordial worth any mony, that will raise your spirits at such a time, and make you with a smiling countenance, to pass into an everlasting state. It is but a folly to expect that any thing in the world should do this for us but the knowledge of our interest in God. Its possible indeed, to get some stupifying intoxicating stuff, that makes a man to dye like a beast, withour any great horror, the Devils shop will furnish poor dying Creatures with enough of that; Nay, he is glad if hé can keep men asleep till death awaken them; but miserable is that man who is beholding to the Devil for his Cordials; miserable is he who hath nothing to keep him from a Hell upon Earth, but his own ignorance, and the Devils word. I promise you, 'tis none of the joyfulllest spectacles to an inlightened Soul, to look upon one that lived wickedly, and died peaceably. You would think, that a poor wan, that is going to Execution, had little cause to smile, though he should ride to the Gallows upon an easie going Horse, or in a Coach. The Swine is usually very still, when the Butcher is

scraping

scraping away the hair of his Throat in order to the Sticking of him. It's no unusual thing for a vile un sanctified sinner, to leap with a mad confidence into Eternity ; but he alone hath a solid peace, who hath God for his friend. This is the only man hath just cause to sing for joy, when his Soul is going into another world. It was none of the worst counsel which he gave, whosoever he was who said, that it doth highly concern us seriously to think of terrible things, which we must most certainly see ere long, and to lay in such provision as may make us fit to grapple with them when they come. O for that which will keep us from crying out hereafter? What shall I do? wo is me, I am undone: were it so that there were such rare extraction to be made which would certainly prolong our lives as long as we would, and make us always cheerful, what striving would their be to get such a receipt? O how would the great ones bring out their bags to purchase it at any rate? How willingly would they mortgage all their Lands, part with their richest Jewels to buy it! & yet how little will they expend for that, which if they had, would prove far more effectual! O would men and women but understand themselves, and mind their business, what sweet lives might they lead! what a calm might there be constantly upon their Spirits! How cheerfully might they live! And how joyfully might they dye! *Tully* saith, that he and many others had been gathering the most powerful herbs that they could find to cure all fears; but, saith he, *I know not what is the matter, the disease is still stronger then the remedy.* And dost thou not know, O *Tully*, what's the matter? why then I

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will

will tell thee, One principal Ingredient was left out, *viz.* Faith in the Blood of Christ, and Union with God by vertue of that Blood. - He that is by Christ brought acquainted with God, need not much fear griefs, sorrows, and such things Christ was acquainted with for him ; he hath unsting'd Death, and sweetned the Grave : all his troubles are now but as Phylick, the Poyson of them is corrected ; though the Pill be bittet, yet it's of his Friends composing, and therefore you may take it without any turning away of your head. *Shew me a man* (said old *Epictetus*) *that is happy truly in his life, and happy in his death, happy in his health, and in his sickness ; happy when poor, scorned, tormented and banished ; in a word, happy in all conditions.* O that I could but talk with such a man ! O that I could see such a spectacle ! Such a one as my eyes never yet beheld ! Why, I will tell thee the reason of it, O *Epictetus*, It is because thou never sawest a Christian, one that was acquainted with God ; for let me tell the world, *Through Grace I have seen such a sight, and do believe it to be the most lovely sight on this side Heaven.* I have seen, one smiling when his Jaws have been falling, and eye-strings breaking ; rejoycing, when most about him were weeping, and accounting it a high act of patience to be willing to live ; and how do you like such a condition ? Is it better to lie quivering, shaking, and groaning, or rejoycing and praying and admiring of free grace, and setting forth the riches of Gods love, and goodness ? which of these would you chuse ? I can easily believe that few are so bad, but that they could be contented as well as *Balaam* to dye the death of the righteous, and to have their latter end

end like his ! But would you dye joyfully ? Why then, you must live holily ; get acquainted with God, and then this may be your state. I remember *Seneca* speaks of one *Pacuvius*, who when he was drunk cry'd out (*I have been alive*) very merrily. But had he well understood himself, he would have thought he had had much better reason to have cryed out, *I am dead, I am dead*. But however, what he said ungroundedly and wickedly, a Child of God may easily and thankfully say ; when he is going to his last sleep, he may with joy and chearfullness say, I have lived, and through grace, I have kept a fair correspondency with my God, my Friend, whom I am now going to dwell with for ever. Do not think therefore that I come to take away your comforts and joys, when I come to perswade you to get acquaintance with God, no such matter, I would have you learn to rejoyce, but yet I would that that joy should be born from above, that the foundation of it should be the knowledge of your interest in Gods love. Other joys may make you have a smiling countenance, but they do not raise and fill the Soul ; for I must tell you, I am far from thinking that every one that laughs, is joyful, and without fears ; Give me a man that knows that God is his portion, and Heaven his inheritance, that knows with what Friend, and in what a happy state he shall live in after Death ; this, this is the chearful man : Such a one as this is can overlook momentary sorrows, he understands full well that the case will be quickly altered with him ; and the thoughts of Eternal happiness do swallow up his temporal miseries ; Tell one of Gods acquaintance, of po-

verty, he values it not, as long as he knows he
 hath a brave estate that can't be confiscated,
 Riches that none can take from him, a treasure
 that thieves can't break through to, and steal.
 — As for all wordly things, he knows that before
 a few years are over, he must part with them
 however; he is of that mans mind, who having
 a considerable sum of many and precious Jew-
 els hid in his saddle, and a little odd money
 in his pocket, was set upon by Thieves; who
 readily went to his pocket, and took what
 was there, and look't no further: Now the man
 escaping clear with his main treasure, is so joyfull
 that he takes no notice of what was stoln from
 him. Thus a Child of God, if he lose his estate,
 his liberty, and all his outward injoyments, he
 counts all these but inconsiderable, as long as his
 Soul is safe, his great treasure is out of their reach.
 Tell him of torments, Racks, Flames, or what the
 policy of Hell can invent, he is not ignorant of
 this, that the more he suffers for Christs sake, the
 greater cause he hath to rejoyce, to be exceeding
 glad; for great shall be his reward in Heaven, and
 while they add to his sufferings, they add to his
 glory; and, though against their will, while they
 would injure him, they do him the greatest kind-
 ness; this light affliction works for him, a far
 more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As
 long as his torments want that dreadfull Epithite,
Eternal, he doth not much pass; the thoughts
 of Gods love makes mans hatred inconsiderable;
 O how sweet are the thoughts of his Friend;
 when his enemies are most bitter? Blessed be God,
 as for those intolerable torments, he knows it's
 beyond mans power, and far from Gods will to
 inflict

inflict them upon him, and so long he cares not much. All other tortures are but a Flea-bite to the pains of Hell, and an enraged Conscience; he can almost dare the World and the Devil to do their worst, as being confident of this, that as long as he is dear to God, his Soul is out of their reach. Threaten him with Banishment, he remembers, that he hath a Friend that will find him out, and bear him company wheresoever he is. Tell him of the barbarous unkindness and treachery of former Friends; he reads that his betters have been worse handled by their pretended Friends; above all, this cheers him, to think that all his Friends will not serve him so, he hath one Friend that will never forsake him, never be unfaithful to him. Now bring a wicked man upon earth, that is without his sorrows, I know there is none, no not one; there is none of them all, but if he were within the sight of those devouring flames, would tremble. Those that have wickedness enough to dare God, will not have courage enough to look him in the face, when he shall appear in flaming fire, to execute vengeance upon the ungodly; he that will not now be troubled at the doing of wickedness, will be troubled hereafter at the suffering for it. Let sinners say what they will, I am sure they can't be long without fears, to behold Christ, and his dear Servants coming together in the Clouds with Millions of mighty Angels to judge the world; I am confident it will be such an amazing sight as can't choose but cool their courage, and make the stoutest heart of them all to quake; I am sure that as light as they make of Damnation, and Gods displeasure, that the day

is coming when they will believe it was no such cowardize to be afraid of an angry God, to fly from the wrath to come, and to run away from so formidable an enemy as Sin. So that it's clear, that a wicked man will first or last be a fearful man, a *Magor missakib*, *Fear on every side*, shall be his name. But now he that doth exceedingly fear to offend God, need not exceedingly to fear any thing else; and he that fears not God, hath cause enough to fear every thing? O Sirs, it's a brave thing to be able to take death cheerfully by the hand, and to walk with him joyfully into another world; and this I say again, a man acquainted with God may do; he hath this to comfort him, death doth more properly give him life, than take it away from him; and that as soon as he is dead his sin shall dye too, and his grace live and act without controul; then he shall live a life of joy, a life of perfect holiness, such a life as Saints and Angels live, such a life as Christ lives, the life of God, a life without death, an everlasting life; and why then should he be afraid of dying? As for his old Companion the body, it is gone to rest, and will ere long be awakened, and rise from his bed more vigorous and fit for those Noble employments which it must be engaged in for ever: And Soul and Body, shall meet with more comfort, than now they part with pain, when the body shall be in another kind of dress than now it wears, and that also shall in some respects be like the Soul, Agile, Holy, Immortal. This is such a man that I can call happy, and so ere long will those that now scorn and persecute him, call him too. Blessed is he that in his life is holy, and cheerfull, but most cheerful and perfect at his death

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death. This is the happy portion of Gods acquaintance, this is the Heritage of the Friends of the Bridegroom. I have read of a wise man, that would commend, and be thankful for every thing, because he was sure a Friend of his had the management of every thing, whose understanding was infinite, and whole Wisdome was unsearchable, who could and would work his own Honour and his Friends Comforts out of every thing, yea, though seemingly evil; for the greater the evil seems to be, the greater will be the real kindness which makes so much good out of it. O but I have lately lost many of my most neer and precious Relations? If thou art one of Gods Friends, let me tell thee for thy Comfort, you will meet them at your Friends House, when you come thither. It was no unsuitable Advice that he gave to his friend *Lucilius*, to cheer him up, after the loss of a dear friend. Let us consider my dear *Lucilius*, that we our selves should be glad to be in that place, and to enjoy that company, which you are so sad that your friend is gone to; and he that you say is lost, is not so, but happy before you. We do not judge rightly of things. Well then, would you know what a man is? would you pass a true estimate of him, and understand his Worth and Value? Why then consider the man without his Riches, lay aside his Honours, take away all his Externals from him; Nay further, lets see the man naked out of his Body, and how doth the Soul look? Is it now Rich, Beautiful, Joyful? Can it stand confidently before God? Doth it appear cheerfully in the presence of its Maker? Why, this is something; It matters not much whether his body were fed
P 4 with

with pulse or Dainties, cloathed with Rags or Scarler, it matters not whether his Soul went out of his mouth, or at a wound, whether he dyed in bed of down, or in flames. Methinks by this time you should be ready to think that Religion is an excellent thing, that Gods acquaintance is desirable, and that no life is like the life of a Christian, all whose sorrows end in joys, whose miseries makes him more happy, whose shame for Christ will make for his glory ; In a word, whose death brings him to life. *This is the generation of them that seek thee, that seek thy face, O Jacob.*

5. Another effect of acquaintance with God, is, That it will make us more highly to honour him. Here familiarity is far from breeding contempt. Those that are strangers to God see not his worth and Excellency, they honour him not, but they have the most vile, low, contemptible thoughts of the infinitely glorious Majesty, and they think any thing will serve his turn ; they make more bold with him than they would do with a man like themselves, they put him off with the leavings of the world : When they have been feeding their lusts, and serving their pleasures, and gratifying the Devil all the day long, then they come between sleep and awake, and pretend a great deal of love to him, and anger with themselves for their sin, whereas God knows, they do but play the hypocrites in all they do, and mean nothing that they say : Lip-devotion, knee-Religion God shall have, and but a little of that too, and that pitiful stuff that they present him with, they think God is very much beholding to them for. As for the sanctifying the Lord God in

in their hearts ; as for inward hearty-love, as for high prizings and admirings of God ; as for a real honouring of God, and worshipping of him in Spi it, and in Truth, it is that which they understand not ; and as for them which do, they Laugh at them, as if they were guilty of the greatest folly in the world. But now he which converseth with God, beholds such a beauty, excellency, Majesty, and Glory in him, that it is ready quite to swallow up his soul ; he speaks much of God, but yet he thinks more ; he wonders that a God of such infinite goodness should be no more loved, that a God of such infinite greatness, justice and holiness should be no more feared, that a God of such unspeakable power should be no more obeyed ; and while he remembers his own contempt of God in former times, and the too mean thoughts that he hath at present of him, he doth even stand astonished to think that he should be on this side the state of the damned. He that before thought every thing too much for God, now thinks nothing enough for him. The man is strangely changed by his new acquaintance, so that he may not improperly be called a *New man*, all things are new with him. In honor to his new guest, he hath got on new cloaths, he is clad with Righteousness, as with a garment : new food, it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven ; new drink, Wine on the Lees well refined, he draws all out of those wells of Consolation, the Promises : he hath new thoughts, words, and actions ; God, invisibles, and all the things of faith are now Substances with him. Now the threats or promises of a God are not counted small matters ;

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Heaven, Hell, and Eternity go for the greatest Realities, because God saith they are such. So he that sometimes lived without God in the World, had no respect at all to Glory, but valued himself and his most base Lust, and the Devil himself before God, doth now respect Gods Glory in all that he doth, he ventures upon nothing deliberately, but what may please him ; Religion runs through all he doth ; He eats, he drinks, and sleeps, and cloaths himself ; he prays, he works, he recreates himself with a design for God. The grand project he still is carrying on, is the honour of God. He will undertake nothing of importance, before he consult with, and hath the advice and direction of his Friend. Whatsoever he hath that is worth any thing, he sends it to this Friend, he presents him with his First Fruits, he sacrificeth his Male, the best of his flock ; desires that his Friend may be always at his House, and that he may have the best entertainment that he can possibly give ; and he is ashamed at the best, that he can make him no more welcome, whom he so highly Honours ; he is grieved that his entertainment is no better ; he would fain give God his first and last thoughts, his warmest Affections ; he would gladly have the strength and vigor of body and soul spent in his service ; he studies how to improve all Mercies and Enjoyments for God, to take hold of all opportunities that he can possibly, and to make the best of them for the promoting that grand Design which he hath on foot, his Honour ; He thinks not Wife and Children, Houses and Lands, Body, Soul, and all that he can make in the World, too good for him. Whatever Temptations he conquers,

conquers, whatsoever sin he Slaves, whatsoever piece of gallantry or prowess he hath done in his inroads upon Satans Kingdom, he gives the Honour of all to the Valor, Conduct, and Assistance of this his Noble Ally and Friend. He sets the Crown of the King of *Ammon*, like *Joab* upon the Head of this King *David*. He hath such a high esteem for God, that he thinks nothing well done but when it is done exactly as he would have it ; he thinks every thing then best, when it is done according to Gods Will : And he counts it no small weakness to be unwilling that infinite Wisdom rather than Folly should have the managing of all the Affairs of the World. He desires to maintain a quick and lively Sense of the Divine Majesty upon his Soul, and that he may here and hereafter give him, as he hath infinite cause, all Honour, Glory, and Praise.

6. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God is this, It would put abundance of life and Vigour into the Soul ; it would, as it were, oyl the Wheels, and set them a running. There are none in the world that Act at so high a rate as those do, which are most acquainted with God. O how undefatigable are they in their Pains ! with what earnestness and faith do they Pray ! as if they saw the glorious God, before them, and were talking with him ; with what Reverence, Seriousness and Delight do they Read, Meditate, and hear the Word, and do all that they do ! They know in some measure what it is to present their Bodies and Souls as a living Sacrifice to God through Christ ; they understand what it means to be fervent in Spirit serving the Lord : they will not serve God with that which cost them

them nothing, kneeling down, and saying a few
 formal words before God in the evening, repeat-
 ing the Lords Prayer, and the Creed, and the
 Ten Commandments between sleeping and wa-
 king doing no body any wrong, and the like,
 is not enough to serve his turn, his conscience will
 not be thus put off; but he labours with all his
 might to stir up his soul to lay hold upon God,
 he is not content to go off from his knees with-
 out his Fathers blessing. This is the friend and
 Acquaintance of God, this is the brave *Israhite*,
 that spiritual Prince that will not let God go till
 he hath prevailed with him. He doth not go to
 his work, as if he cared not whether he work'd
 or no; he is not sick of the service of God, but
 he rejoyceth and works righteousness; his work
 is his pleasure, and he goes on merrily with his
 business. Those that are intimately acquainted
 with God, are not so cold, faint, and dull in the
 service of God as others be. Such a one as knows
 God very well, and hath been oft made welcome
 by him; why, he comes with a great deal of
 confidence, and knocks at Gods door, and, for
 his part, he will not go away, though the door
 be not presently opened; but he continues knock-
 ing, because he is sure that his Friend is within;
 he knows that he is never from home, and that
 he can never come unseasonably to him. He
 comes to Prayer as if he were going to storm
 Heaven, he gets spiritual things by violence, he
 comes to Duty as to fight for a Crown, he is
 ashamed to offer the lame and the blind to God, but
 he chooseth for him the best in his flock; he de-
 sires to improve his interest in God to the height,
 this favourite of Heaven comes frequently to the
 King

King to beg some great thing or other ; and he is sure that his Friend will deny him nothing, that it is not a greater kindness to deny than give ; he knows that his King hath a large purse, and as large a heart, and he is not willing to lose such excellent things that are to be had for the asking for ; he is not ignorant that spiritual things are worth the seeking for, and therefore he will seek and seek earnestly ; he hath tried more than once, and he remembers to his joy that wonderful things are to be had, if we will but take pains for them, and prefer our Petitions or rather get them prefer'd by that great Master of Requests, the Lord Jesus Christ, and follow our business close, that it can't possibly miscarry let it be what it will ; the comfort in enjoying will abundantly pay all the charges we can be at in seeking ; therefore he lays about him as one that is in good earnest ; the confidence that he hath in the good will of God, it puts life into all his petitions. A poor Creature that very rarely enjoys any communion with God, that is very little or not at all acquainted with him, is ready to take up with a few formal complemental performances, he is weary of his work before he hath well begun it, he is quickly out of breath ; but now one that is very well acquainted with God, is not so soon weary of his company ; it may be, he may be somewhat cold when he sets out, but by that time he hath gone a few turns with his Friend, his Blood grows warm, he is sometimes so taken up with God in duty, that he can scarce tell when to have done ? O he thinks it's good being there ? O it was a sweet season ! These are the actings and experiences of
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some noble Souls. I have heard some Christians say, that had not God made it their duty to follow their callings, they could be glad with all their hearts to do nothing else, day nor night, but hear the mysteries of Gods love in Christ opened; Read, Pray, Meditate, and be immediately engaged in the Service of God. Sure something is the matter with these persons more than Ordinary, that their Palate should be so Spiritualized, as that it is their Food, their Wine, their Dainties, to be actually imployed in the great acts of Religion. The more any one is acquainted with God, the more delight he takes in the Ordinances of God, as one of Gods Children, he desires the sincere milk of the word: Before he was acquainted with God, he found it far otherwise; then nothing almost would down with him, the pure word could not be relished, except it was Adulterated with flourishes of humane wit. He had very little appetite to good wholesome Food; his stomach was ready to turn at it, except it were so cook't, and sawc't, and set out, that an understanding man could scarce tell what to make of it! What do you say to this, you that are so faint and cold, in what you do, in the Service of God? Come a little nearer, get better acquainted with God, and you shall find such entertainment from him, that you will scarce be able to keep long from his house; get oft into his company, and you shall feel your Soul strengthened with new Spirits, animated with a strange life, Heat and Warmth. You will not complain that the Sabbath is the longest day in the week; you will not say, *what a weariness is it? When will the new Moons and Sabbaths be*

at an end? But you would think long till the Sabbath day come, and when it is come, the pleasure that you take in the work of that day would make you to think it the shortest day, and gone too soon; and when you have spent it in the most diligent attendance upon God, you would wish it were to begin again, or that you were to begin such a Sabbath, that would never have an end. This is the condition of one that is very intimately acquainted with God; his nearness to his Master, makes him to follow his work, and he knows he shall lose nothing by it; something will be coming in ever and anon, which will more than quit his cost; So that when God calls, he is at hand, and readily answers, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth*. When God hath any message, any hot Service to do, he accounts it his great honour to be Employed in it, and saith, here I am, send me. I believe he that spake it (*Ar. Ep. l. c. 9.*) might be a little confident, when he said, *Lay what thou wilt upon me, O God, I have power to bear it, it shall not be my Burden, but my Ornament*: Yet I am perswaded one that is acquainted with God, can say it, and say it again in good earnest; Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Wilt thou have me to preach for thee, to run through Fire, and Water for thee, to dye for thee, to go or come? O Lord do but bear me company, and give me strength, and it shall be done: I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. This is one of Gods Champions, he watches, he keeps upon his guard, he fights stoutly, he stands his ground, in every thing he demeans himself gallantly, he quits himself like a Souldier of Christ; and that which makes him thus valiant,

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is because he is so near his Captain. Ask *Epictetus* what made *Socrates* do as he did, and he will tell you (l. 3. 22) *It was because he was a Friend of God his Servant, and partaker of his Kingdom.* This is strange Language of a Heathen! but had he known what it was to live under the most lively sense of Gods love, to have had such intimate converse with him, as some Christians have had, what would he have said? As for the Saint that keeps close to God, he keeps close to duty; his work is to serve, love, and praise God: Thus is his business, both by himself, and with others.

7. Another excellent effect of this acquaintance with God, is, it will make a man Patient under all the dispensations of Gods providence, in all conditions to be content, in quietness to possess his Spirit: Acquaintance with God will make him be at peace, not to open his mouth against God, whatsoever he lays upon him. What was it that kept such a calm in *Pauls* heart, when there was such a constant storm without him? was it not his sense of his interest in Gods love? though all the world were his enemies, yet as long as Christ was his Friend, he doth not care, though men and devils be against him; yet if God be for him, he passeth not much upon it: though men be never so unjust, yet God will never be so, that's his comfort. It's a small matter for him to be judged with mans judgment, as long as he is sure that God will acquit him; he knows that justice it self will do him no wrong, infinite goodness could not be unkind, and that wisdom it self could work glorious effects out of these things, which the world call evil; if he do receive evil at
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the hands of God, he is confident he deserves more; if it be good, and but a little, he is thankful, because he deserved none at all. Let the worst come to the worst, if all the Devils in Hell, and all his instruments upon Earth should combine against him, as long as he is sure of the love of God, and that none of them all can pluck him out of the Arms of the Almighty, he is not very much concerned; Heaven will make amends for all: whatsoever he suffers, it is nothing to the displeasure of a God, it is nothing to everlasting burnings. He believes that if his Persecutors did know what he knows, they would as soon eat fire, as do as they do; therefore he rather pities them, than is angry with them, as seeing that their day is coming! How seldome have you either *Paul* or *Silas* complaining of their sufferings? How rarely bemoaning their condition? And what is it that makes them so patient? What have they to sweeten such bitter draughts? Why, God loves them; and so long they do not much care though others hate them. Mans frowns can't sink a Soul to Hell, nor his favour make one happy for ever. It is but a little while, and all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes. The kindness, and faithfulness of God is enough to make a man cheerfully to hold up his head, when all the world is against him. When the most Spiritual Christians do complain, it is more of themselves, than of their persecutors: O my unbelieving heart! O that I should love God no more! O that my heart should be no more taken up with the great things of Eternity! This is the condition which those that are most Spiritual are in Poverty, Imprisonment, Banishment, and all these

these things which most call dreadfull, when they come to a man that is much in communion with God, they find him Patient, Meek, and Calm, these are not the things which put him upon the rack ; God is his Friend, and that answers all.

8. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make all our enjoyments doubly sweet. He hath what he hath in love ; he need not be afraid of poyson in any of those Dainties which comes from his dearest Friends Table ; he may eat his meat with a joyful heart, and not tremble for fear of the reckoning at last ; what he enjoys is freely given him ; all his Dishes have this brave Sauce, they are season'd with love, and come out of the hand of a Father. He that is the great proprietor, hath given him leave to use these things and hath promised also to give him better things than these. He knows that this is not his portion, that this is nothing to what he shall possess ; It is no small comfort to him, to think that he shall never want any thing that is needful for him ; or that if he be brought into some exigencies, he hath a Friend that he can go to when he will, and be heartily welcome ; he hath a portion, an estate in another Country that can never be spent, though he live at never so high a rate ; and the more he spends upon it, the greater it is ; he hath a key to that store-house which can never be emptied ; he hath an interest in him in whom all fulness doth dwell : his Friend is noble, let him *but ask and he shall have, seek and he shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto him,* God is so free that he takes care of all his creatures ; yea, so great is his Royal Bounty, that it doth largely provide
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for his enemies ? and shall his friends, his children starve ? Hath he not done so in ancient days : when his people were in the Wilderness, he sent them their Dyet from his own house, he fed them with Angels food. But if this should not be, if he kept them short, that may be done with as great kindness to them as the former : fasting may fatten the soul more then feasting doth the body ; and this makes all welcome. If he have a great deal, he rejoyceth to think that he shall have more still one day ; if he have but a little he is satisfied ; and so his condition is made more comfortable to him, than the greatest enjoyments of the wicked are to them.

9 Another effect of his Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man wise. He that before he was acquainted with God had not the wit to know his friends from his Foes, by his converse with God is made more wise than the great Sages and grand Politicians of the world. Upon his acquaintance with God he is soon able to know right from wrong, to distinguish between good and evil. He hath now the wisdom to look after the salvation of his soul, to seek the Kingdom of Heaven in the first place, and not too be laughed and jeered into Hell. He is so wise, that he doth out-wit the Devil himself ; he doth get so much wisdom by his acquaintance with God ; that God will reveal many of his great secrets to him. I know one my self that was little different from those which are commonly called *Naturals*, whom when the Lord had wonderfully wrought upon, and brought near to himself, after his converse and acquaintance with God, his very natural understanding was exceedingly

refined, and afterward he become more discreet and fit to manage worldly affairs. But however this be, I am sure the knowledge of God gives understanding to the simple. *A good understanding have they which love the Lord: and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.* Converse with men of Wisdom doth not a little improve a man: but converse with the wise God it makes a strange Alteration indeed, they are made wise unto Salvation. Of such as these David thought it best to make his Privy Council. These are the persons that are the fittest to advise with in businesses of the greatest importance in the world; they have learned the art of managing the affairs of greatest concernment with the greatest care and prudence. I know the wise world usually look upon the persons of the veriest fools living. To converse with God, to take all possible care to make their calling and election sure, to do what one can to be happy for ever, goes amongst them for a ridiculous thing, and more than needs. But it is no great matter, they will not be beat from their work thus; they should be fools indeed, if such things as these should make them turn their backs upon God; they will not be jeer'd out of Heaven, they pass not upon mans censures. He is wise that God calls so, and he will be found to be a fool which God saith is so. As for the man that is acquainted with God, all his actions speak him a man of prudence, one that hath a deep reach with him, he is a man of an excellent foresight, he sees the clouds a gathering a great way off, the storm before it riseth, and he hides himself, in him are hid the treasures of Wisdom, he makes no foolish choice, he is a child of

of wisdom ; he doth in some measure understand himself, and knows where his interest lies, and is faithful to it ; he makes no foolish bargains, when he parts with Dung for Diamonds, Brass for Gold, Earth for Heaven, Sin for Holiness, present short-liv'd Pleasures for sure and everlasting Delights, the Devil for God. How say you, ye mad Gallants, that look upon the Saint as a Fool, and Religion as a Ridiculous thing ? Are these such foolish actings ? is it so undiscreet a choice to prefer Heaven before Hell ? If this be to be a fool, I wish I were more such a fool ; if this be so contemptible a thing, O that I may yet be more vile ! Let me say further, as great a folly as it is, there are none of you all, but ere long will wish you had been such fools. A few years will make you all of another mind, when you see what those that you counted fools have got, and what you with your wisdom have lost ; then let's hear you calling them fools for chusing Christ for their portion ; and your self wise for despising him, and chusing of this present world for your portion. Now, it is their being acquainted with God, that hath made them thus wise ; time was, that they were as very fools as any in the world, till they fell into Gods company ; and ever since that, they have acted with a great deal more prudence : their being much in Gods company hath much improved them. They may thank God for all that skill that they have attained to ; for he it is that taught them, he is always at their elbow to direct them ; when they are about to be cheated, he whispers them in the ear, lets them understand the fraud ; and when God speaks, they listen to his counsel. It was no

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falshood which *Seneca* spake (though he understood not the meaning of this Doctrine of Reconciliation) in the commendation of Wisdom. *Wisdom* (saith he) is a great spacious thing, it instructs us both in Divine and humane things; it teacheth a man how to demean himself in relation to things, past, present, and to come: it informs him about things that are fading, and things that are lasting; and by it he knows how to put a true estimate and value upon both: this teaches one the difference between Time and Eternity. Thus saith *Seneca*: But where is This Wisdom to be found? not in *Aristotle* nor *Plato's* writings. The grand Maxims of this Wisdom were little understood in the *Peripatetick* or *Stoick* Schools; Flesh and Blood, Humane wisdom improv'd to the height, reveal not these things to us. Where then is this Wisdom to be found? and where is the place of understanding? man knows not the price of it naturally: The *Depth* saith, It is not in me, it can't be got for Silver, &c. Destruction and Death say, we have heard the Fame thereof with our ears. There is talk of Wisdom in Hell, there they can say what reports were made to them of the excellencies of Christ, and how earnestly they were offered to be instructed in the ways of Wisdom. But in Hell there is no Wisdom, though a world of them, which by their wisdom knew not God, be there: where then is wisdom? God understands the way of it, and he teacheth man wisdom, and those that will come to him submit to his instructions, may learn: the Lesson is short, yet learnt but by few; he tells man, that to fear and love his Maker, and to be brought into Union, Friendship, and Acquaintance with God, that is Wisdom; and to depart from

from iniquity, that is understanding, *Job* 28. 12, 13, 14, &c.

10. Another effect of this Acquainted with God, is, It will make a man rich. As soon as any one is acquainted with God, he is set in a thriving way. Man at the first had his estate in his own hands, and he kept up his Trade for a little time, and but for a little time; for though his stock was great, yet meeting with the Serpent, that great Cheater, he was miserably overreached, and so sadly impaired in his Spiritual Estate, that he broke presently; and had not Jesus Christ stepped in and bayled him, and been his surety, he would soon have had all his Creditors upon his back, and have been laid up in that dismal prison; till he should have paid the utmost farthing; but through the kindness of Christ the grand Creditor had patience, and offers to make up the business, and to compound upon better terms than the sinner could possibly expect. Christ undertakes to heal the infinite breach, to bring God and Man acquainted, and to set him up again, in case he will but accept of the gracious terms of agreement; and thus undone man that was before in a beggarly condition, upon his return to God, is set in a better way than ever; God his Friend now takes such order for him, that he shall be sure never to break again; he will be his Cash-keeper, he will have the over-sight of all, he will teach him such an art, that he shall be sure to get by every thing that he trades in; he shall gain by his losses, grow rich by his poverty, and drive the best trade it may be, when he is forced to shut his Shop-doors, I mean in a time of a violent persecution. Whatsoever losses or Crosses
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come, he is sure he shall never be undone as long as his Friend hath so great a bank; he hath a key, and he can go to an infinite Treasury, when he pleaseth, and fetch out supplies for any exigencies or occasions; and when all those that made such a great show in the World, and that were taken for Merchants, that were exceeding well to pass, shall be proclaimed Bankrupts, and be found not worth a Farthing, and be carryed to prison for debt; then he hath mony in his purse, coyn that will go currant in any Country. In the mean time, though he be thought to be worth nothing, to drive but a pityful poor trade, yet when he comes to dye, and when an exact inventory is taken of all that he is worth, he is found worth thousands: and no wonder when he hath such a Partner, that will be sure to see that his business shall be managed to the best advantage, and that he shall never be out of purse; upon this account, the man can't choose but thrive; he will have something to shew for his gains, when others have nothing. When the rich ones of the world shall be begging a drop of water, he is at the fountain. If we should take a survey of that mans estate, that is acquainted with God, you must lift up your eyes to those everlasting Hills, you must look East, West, North and South; all this is his, things present, and things to come; mount up to the top of *Carmel*, your sight is too short, you see not the hundredth part of his inheritance, all this is nothing, he hath a brave estate in another Country; he is rich in Bills and Bonds, when he comes to age, he will have no man know what falls to him; and whence hath he all this wealth, hath he not got every penny of it since he was ac-

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acquainted with God? But I shall be but brief upon this Head, because I have handled, what might have fallen in here before; but the world laughs when I speak at this rate, and think that I am much mistaken; the godly man rich! that's strange! what, rich with scarce cloaths to their back? rich, and fare so hardly! rich, and possess nothing! this is strange wealth. I grant it is, it is so, for their estate is in invisibles; it is not he that possesseth much, but he that wants little, is rich. Will you call nothing riches, but Gold and Silver, and Houses and Lands? is Virtue, Grace, Holiness no riches? And will you call these little because he hath not so much trouble and vexation with his estate as some have? is Heaven, Glory, the everlasting enjoyment of God nothing? Is the possessing that which is more worth than a thousand Worlds, no riches; If to have all things that are good for them; If to have more than their hearts can conceive; If to be filled with all Spiritual plenty, be counted poverty; let me be thus poor, rather than enjoy the Revenue of all the Princes, and great Ones of the World. And what do you think of this, you that are worth never a penny? Are you desirous to have a great Estate? you that go backward, and get nothing, would be set in such a way, as that you may be sure never to break. Why then, get acquainted with God, and you can't but grow rich.

11. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it makes a man like God, which is the top of the Creatures honour. Company is of an assimilating nature. He that before was unholy, and like the Devil; by conversion to God, and

and converse with him is made holy like God. He that before was cruel, fiery, unmerciful, by his acquaintance with God is made kind, meek, and lovely. He that in his natural state, was a Non-Conformist to the Laws of his Maker, when he is well studied in this point, is the stiffest Conformist, he sticks close to the righteous Cannons of the holy God, and will not by his good will turn to the right hand, or to the left. He that was sometimes very unlike God, when he is brought nigh unto him, his countenance is changed, his features are altered, and the lineaments of Gods image appear very lively in his face; and the more he is in Gods company, and the older he grows, the more he grows like him. O how doth such a one shine! what a Majesty, Glory, and Beauty is there in his face! the oftner he comes to God the more he is taken with his Excellency, the more he labours to imitate him. He studies what God is; and as far as his nature is capable of it in this life, he desires to be like him. If God be true and faithful, he dares not be false; but he will hate the way of lying; if God be free and bountiful, he thinks it very ill becomes one of his Children to hide his face from his own flesh, to shut up his bowels, to be void of natural affection. If purity be so eminent in God, he knows that impurity would not be commendable in himself. In a word, he desires in every thing to carry himself, as one whose highest ambition, is to speak, act, and think as one that would be like God. It was bravely spoken of him (*Sen. Ep. 37.*) especially if we consider what the man was, who told his Friend that call'd him to Heaven in commendium, *To get as much happiness as this place, this*
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soul, while in this body, is capable of; that is, to get God for his Friend, to be like him. This is a short cut to glory, a Soul carried to Heaven, or Heaven brought down to the Soul. A full and perfect conformity and likeness to God is the very Glory of Glory; and a partial conformity to him upon earth, is his unspeakable honour in this life. O were men and women better acquainted with God, they would sparkle and shine in their Generation, so that their enemies should be forced to say, that a Saint is another kind of Creature than a sensual sinner. O why stand you then so far off from God! come nearer him, and the rays of his glorious Image will reflect from your lives! Be acquainted with him, and you shall be like him; keep much in his company by Faith, secret Prayer, and Meditation, and you will be more Holy, Divine, and Spiritual.

12. The last effect of this acquaintance with God, which I shall name, is this, it will make a man better, far more Excellent in all states, and relations; all his Friends will have the better life with him, the whole Family, it may be where he dwells, will fare the better for him. If he be a Child, he is more dutiful to his Parents than he was, while he was unacquainted with God? if he be a Servant, he is more diligent and Faithful than before, he serves not with eye service, but doth what he doth with singleness of heart, as unto the Lord? If he be a Master, it makes him more exemplary, and makes him to take care that his Household should serve the Lord; he had rather his servants should make bold with him than God, he is concerned for the honour of God in his Family, as much as his own; if he be a Father,

ther, he is careful to bring up his children for God, he is more Spiritual in his affections to them, and desirous to leave them God for their Father, Friend, Portion: as he is a Neighbour, he follows peace with all men, and holiness, because he hath seen God. How sweet and amiable doth acquaintance with God make a man! how ready to heal divisions! how full of goodness and charity! how ready to do good unto all, but especially to those that be of the Household of Faith! how compassionate, and tender-hearted! How ready to provoke others also to love, and good works: so that the whole Parish lives the quieter, all the poor fare the better, all the Neighbourhood, some way or other is beholding to him: one that knows God himself, doth what he can to get others acquainted with God too? How sweetly doth he commend the way of Wisdom? whith what earnestness, and pity doth he plead with sinners, and labour to teach transgressors the paths of God, that sinners may be converted unto him? How doth he set before them the necessity of a change, the danger of their present state, and the excellent qualities of this Friend that he would bring them acquainted with, telling them, that time was, that he also was as they are, and thought his condition as safe as they do their's: but that it pleased the Lord by this word to open his eyes, and to reveal to him the need that he had of Christ, and to inable him to accept of him, and to prize him above the whole world. In all conditions, and relations, he commends Religion, and shews that godliness, where it is in the power and life of it, is a brave thing, which makes so great an alteration in a man for the better?

better? If he be sick, he rejoyceth, and thinks cheerfully of death, the Grave and Eternity: and in this state demeans himself so, that standers by, can't but be convinced of the reality of Invisibles, and to think sure there is something more than ordinary in acquaintance with God, which makes men so undaunted, and with so much gallantry to meet death; sure their condition is better than ours, or else they could never be so joyful at such a time as this is: Then he tells us of the use of a Christ, the benefit of a Redeemer in a dying hour, and how infinitely it is for their interest, in time to provide for Eternity? if he be well, he desires to improve his health for God, and to serve his Maker with the strength of Body, and Soul. If he be poor, he shews a pattern of Patience, Meekness, Thankfulness, and lets the world understand that Godlyness with content is great gain; if he be rich, he desires to be rich in good works also, and to trade with such trifles as Gold and Silver, for rich commodities, as Grace, Peace and Glory: with the things of this World, for the things of another: To lay up for himself Treasure, which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and steal; and to make to himself a friend of the unrighteous Mammon; to be a Faithful steward of those Talents that his great Lord and Master hath committed to his trust: he shows how great a good it is to be great and good too. This is the man, which doth adorn the Gospel: This is the Christian which doth credit his profession; this, 'tis to be intimately acquainted with God! O how usefull might men and women be in their generations, were they but more in Gods company? O what

a favour would there be of their Graces in the place where they live? How would poor Creatures that receive good by their holy counsels, and fixable lives, bless God for the day that ever they were born, and adore that goodness which brought them near such and such a one, by whose means God hath brought them out of the Vassalage and Captivity of Satan and by whose help they have got acquainted with a Friend that is more worth to them than a world; for one that hath God for his Friend, can't but desire that others also should have an interest in him, they know how ill it will go with them that know not God, and this makes them to do what they can to bring God and man acquainted; they would make those that are good better, and them that are bad good? if those that he converseth with, or stands related to, were enemies, he lets them know that a Christian can love him dearly, whose sin he hates entirely, and that a child of God can pity them, that have no pity at all for him. I might add how oft are a great many wicked ones spared from temporal judgments, for the sakes of the righteous that are amongst them.

III. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of *Motives* to enforce this Exhortation, might be taken from the danger of not being acquainted with God. If you could live securely without God, and be in a safe condition, though you still remained a stranger to him, the business then were not so very considerable; if you could find any in Heaven that could do as much

much for you as God can, I should not be so earnest with you to get an interest in his favour; if you could by any means possible be everlastingly happy any other way, if without this Friend get to Heaven, and without his Alliance avoid utter ruine, I should have had the less reason to use so much importunity; I might then possibly have spared my self the trouble of speaking these things, and you the trouble of hearing of them. But when I see and know that it is as much as their life and soul is worth, to slight and undervalue the Motions that I am now a making to you in Christs stead, how can I with any faithfulness and love to your souls hold my peace? How can I stand looking upon men and women that are about to murder their own souls, and forbear crying out? How can I endure to see poor Creatures running with all the speed they can to that dismal place, from whence there is no Redemption, and not endeavour to stop them? Would you have me so cruel to your souls, as not to tell that which doth infinitely concern their well-being? for, let me tell you, God will not stand Neuter, he will be either for you, or against you; he is the Lord of Hosts, and he will fight on one side or other. Now see to your matters, as the nature of them doth require. What do you think of having a God against you? if God be against you, who will be for you? *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* The safest condition you can be in, while God is your enemy, is sadly hazzardous; such a one hangs by a twined thread over everlasting flames; he stands upon the brink of that bottomless pit, and one shove, one slip, sends him going
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for ever; he stands upon a pinnacle, which one little blast may blow him off, and then where is the man to all Eternity? if he fall thence, there is no rising again; if he once go into that other World, there is no recovery of him, if one would give a World to bring him back again. I say it again, if God be not your Friend, he will be your Enemy: and what do you think of such an Enemy? It is but a word, a look, and they fall. Let me tell you, that except you speedily humble your selves, you shall find that we do not make the danger greater than it is: according to his fear, so is his wrath: you may know soon enough to your cost, what the displeasure of a God is, how dreadful his arrows, how sharp his sword. Not a man of them shall scape that will not accept of peace upon his terms, and that quickly too. O that will be a sad day, when God shall say, *Bring them out and slay them before my face.* If God be your Enemy, who do you think will be your Friend? To which of the Saints or Angels will you fly? Where will you go for shelter against the storm of that terrible one? what armour will defend you from the dint of his weapons? What in the world can stand that man in any stead that hath such an Adversary? especially when he comes to give his definitive sentence against him for high Treason. *Dives* may say, Father; and *Abraham*, Son: but what comfort for all that had the miserable Child from his holy Father? doth he not instead of cooling his tongue with a drop of water, lay more burning coals upon it, and if it be possible make the heat of it greater: *son, remember that thou in thy life time hadst thy good things.* Thus *Abraham* by putting him in mind what his condition was,

was, makes him with the greater sorrows to feel what it is. The memory of former joys under present Sorrows, makes them sting the more. Well then, if you would not hereafter reflect with an aking heart upon your lost Enjoyments, think with a serious and thankful heart of the present offers, that you may in Eternity reflect with joy upon your short Sorrows in time. If you will not be acquainted with God, you shall be acquainted with the Devil, and know whose company is best by woful experience. If you will not believe his Word, you shall feel his Sword. If his Kindness and Goodness will not melt you, his power and justice shall break you; for he that now is so patient, will ere long roar like a Lyon, and tear in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver; he will break his stubborn enemies with a rod of Iron, and dash them in pieces like a potters vessel. Those that will not know his love, shall know something else; I will not say what, for it is Inexpressible. But only this Remember, It is such a God that you will have to deal with, before whom the mountains quake, and the hills remove out of their places, before whom the great Tyrants of the world have fallen; and shall you stand? Where are all those Giants? Where are the inhabitants of the old World? What is become of *Nimrod* that mighty hunter, and all his fellows? Where are all those daring sinners, that scorned to accept of a Pardon, Mercy and Peace, and which had the Courage to grapple with Omnipotency it self? Who got the day? who had the worst of it at last? And art thou stronger than they? Is thy power greater, thy understanding deeper, thy Allyes more confident

rable than theirs? A fly may be too hard for *Pharaoh*; but *Pharaoh* can never be too hard for God. Because judgment is not speedily executed against thee, thou thinkest therefore (it may be) it is because God cannot deal with thee, and upon this account thy heart is fully set in thee to do wickedly, but know thou, for all this that God will bring thee to judgment. Consider this, that as fair as it seems to be now, the winds may rise, the clouds may gather of a sudden, the Heavens may be overcast in a moment; and what will you do then? when Heaven and Earth shall be in a Flame, then you will be scraping acquaintance with God, then you will be glad to be owned by him, then you would willingly Christ should take notice of you, and say, *You blessed of my Father*; then you will stand at the door and Knock, and Cry, and Pray, and Plead, and say, *Lord, Lord, have I not been oft at thy house? have I not eat at thy table, and taught in thy name in our streets?* And yet thou shalt be dismissed with this short and sharp answer, *Depart, I know you not.* How do you like such an answer as this is? How will you take it, when you stand begging at the door for one crumb of mercy; one drop of Christs blood, to be sent away with a bitter scorn and denial, or else to be answered with silence? Whereas you were invited to the feast as well as those that went in, and you would not hear, though God sent Messenger after Messenger to fetch you, you thought your oxen better company than your God, you took more pleasure in your dogs, than in the hunting after those nobler things. What do you think of such expostulations as these? What replies can you make

make to these accusations? Ere long you will find these things realities; ere long all your friends will be dead and gone, and if they would help you, they cannot; your estate will be consumed, your houses will all be burnt, all your attendants, except care and fear, will shortly forsake you; your Gold and Silver will not ere long be worth a rush; and what will you do then? nay, the greatest friends that you had will become your Enemies. Little do you think, as kind as they seem to be, what your good fellows, the World, and the Devil will do against you; little do you think how false your friends will prove when it comes to that, that they see that all is going: Then they also will help forward your ruine. Those that you durst have trusted your life with, will accuse you and help to cast you. Those which encouraged to sin, will witness against you for sin. Your good Fellows, your Confederates in wickedness, your dear Friends, that you loved more then God, that you did not spare to venture your Life and Soul for. O it will make your heart ake to see such come in against you, which you thought loved you so dearly! O to have a Wife, a Child, a Husband, an old Friend to come before the Judge, and to make known such things as you hoped had been buried for ever. It will make your ears tingle, to hear one crying out, Lord, if it had not been for him, I had turned and repented; it's long of him that I am in this woful condition; I was resolved many a time and oft to seek after another world, and to provide for my Soul, but he would not let me alone; when I began to be serious, he laughed and jeer'd me, and would never be at quiet till he had made

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me as bad as himself; he carryed me from the Ale-house to the Tavern, from thence to a Play-house, from a Play-house to a Whore-house, from thence to the High-way, from thence to the Gaol, from the Gaol to the Gallows, and from thence I came hither; and I may thank him for all this. O how will men look when they see the best Friends that they had, come in thus against them! This 'tis to trust to faithless Friends; this 'tis to make light of acquaintance with God. Your Gold and Silver will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh as with a canker; your Children, Relations Good and Bad, will speak bitter things against you; your own Family will curse you, and say, Lord, we never heard any thing of God, except in an Oath from his mouth; we never heard any thing of Religion, except it were in derision of it in his Family; and those of us that were a little serious, and began to think of our Souls, he would snib and brow-beat, and never give us a kind look till we did as he did; nay, the Devil who now doth so much flatter sinners, and make them believe that he is so much their Friend, will then show himself; he will then be as cruel as he now seems kind; he that now tempts to sin so impetuously, will hereafter accuse for sin violently, and torment for sin unmercifully. The people of God which weep over sinners, and pray for them, and wish them well with their Souls, will then see justice executed upon their nearest Relations, without the least sorrow; nay, they also will come in against them too, and say, Lord I told them of this woful day, O Lord thou knowest I forewarned them of that which is now come to pass,

pass, I pleaded with them with all the compassion that I could, and they scorned my pity, they would not pity themselves, but made light of that Glory which they are going from, and of that Hell that they are going to ; and now, O Lord, thou art just and Righteous, that thou hast thus judged them. This will be the Language of those that are your best Friends ; the people of God they will be your Enemies one day, if you will not now mind the making of your Peace with God ; they must and will, be on Gods side against all the World ; they must and will take part with their Friend, and clear him when he judges, and justifie him when he condemns you. O that you that are now strangers to God, would but consider of these things ! O that you would but think what this Battel may be, where the Combatants are so unequal. Stand still, O Sun, in the Valley of *Ajalom*, till the Lord have avenged him of his Enemies : Muster your selves, O ye Stars, and fight in your courses against those miserable sinners, that have waged a War against their Maker ; plant your mighty Cannons, shoot down huge Hailstones, Arrows of Fire, and hot Thunderbolts : O how do the wounded fall ! How many are the slain of the Lord, multitudes, multitudes in the Vally of Decision, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold Gods Enemies falling by thousands, behold the garments rouling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with Horses and Chariots of Fire. Gods Souldiers run from one place to another with their flaming Swords in their Hands, Arm'd with the justice of God, jealousy, Power and Indignation ! O the dreadful

slaughter that is made. Millions, Millions fall, they are not able to stand, not one of them can lift up his hand, their hearts fail them, paleness and trembling hath Seized upon the stoutest of them all. The bow of the Lord is strong: From the Blood of the Slain, from the Fat of the mighty, the Bow of the Lord turneth not back, the Sword of the Almighty returns not empty? How do the mighty Ones, fall in the midst of this battle! A hot Battel indeed in which none scape? Who is he that cometh from *Edom* with dyed Garments from *Bosrah*? He that is Glorious in his Apparel, and Travelling in the greatness of his Strength, the Lord of Hosts is his Name. Wherefore art thou red in thy Apparel, and thy Garments like him that treadeth the Wine-fat? I have troden the Wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I will Tread them in mine Anger, and trample them in my Fury, and their Blood shall be sprinkled upon my Garments, and I will stain all my Raiment; for the day of Vengeance is in my Heart, and the year of my Redemption is come. And I will Tread down the People in mine Anger, and make them Drunk in my Fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth, the hand of the Lord shall be known, the power of the mighty *Jehovah* shall be felt, and his Indignation towards his Enemies. For behold he will come with Fire and with Chariots like a Whirl-wind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebuke with flames of Fire: For by fire, and by his Sword will he plead with all Flesh: And the slain of the Lord shall be many, and the Saints shall go forth and look upon the Carcases of the Men, that have Transgressed against

gainst me: For their Worm shall not die, neither shall their Fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all Flesh. Upon the wicked he shall Rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and a horrible Tempest. This shall be the Portion of their Cup! This 'tis to fight against God! This 'tis to defie the Lord of Host! This 'tis to refuse a Peace that would have been so unspeakably advantageous! To speak a little plainer, this is all that sinners are like to get by their standing it out against the tenders of Grace and Mercy. And are you still desirous to Engage in this Dreadful War? Will you still bid Defiance to the Almighty, and make nothing of such things as you have heard of? Is the loss of your blood, the loss of your Soul, your utter undoing for ever, no great matter with you? Well then, go on bold sinner, Arm thy self *Cap-a-pee*, gird thy Sword upon thy Thigh, get thy Shield and Buckler ready, prepare to meet thy God: Go up, O thou valiant Warrior, and lets see thy Valour, behold thy Enemy hath taken the Fiend; go up, and look thy God in the face if thou darest; come shew thy self a mark for God, and turn not thy back like a Coward, venture upon the mouth of the Cannon. Rush upon the thick Bosses of Gods Buckler, if you long to perish everlastingly. You have heard what the War will cost you, and as you like it now, do. And what, do you laugh at all this? Well then, go on, but be it upon your perril, your blood be upon your own Soul: As for me I could not have said much more than I have, to dissuade you from this desperate Enterprize; I foresee what a case you will be in, when you are in the heat of the Battel, and I desire to weep in secret for thee,

as one that will most certainly be undone, if thou dost not speedily alter thy mind, wherefore my Loyns are filled with pain, Pangs have taken hold upon me as the Pangs of a Woman that Travellereth; I am bowed down at the thoughts of the Misery, I am dismayed at the seeing of thy Destruction. The sinner ventures for all this! He is marched into the Field! Set a Watch-man; let him declare what he seeth. Who meets that furious Wretch? A Lyon, a Lyon roareth, he is torn in pieces, and none can save him, he is gone, he is gone! He is gone for ever! And who may the mad man thank for all this? Who could help it? He would venture though he was told as much. Well then, see what's like to befall the Enemies of God: You hear, what is like to be the Condition of all them that will not be acquainted with God: First, or Last, you likewise may behold what a case you your self shall be in ere it be long, except you do speedily Repent of your Folly, and meet your Adversary in the way, and humble your self before the mighty *Jehovah*; speak quickly? What will you do? Turn, or Burn; Repent, or Die. Yet you do but hear, you do not feel; but thousands and millions feel what the Displeasure of God is, what the breach of his Covenant is, and what effects of a War with the Lord of Hosts is, O be wise by their Falls, let their Destruction be your Instruction, take heed what you do, lest you be the next that God shall deal with as an Enemy: As yet God offers to be Friends with you; but whether God will do as much to morrow as he doth to day, I do not know. I tell you but so, it's hard putting it to the venture. Remember you had large proffers

proffers of Grace and Pardon made to you, God hath sent us to let you know his Will and pleasure, and we demand of you from him to give us your answer speedily. And what, can't you yet resolve? Is it so difficult a business to determine what to fix upon? O foolish People and unwise? O unspeakable Madness! How just must their Condemnation needs be, who are offered Salvation so often, and refuse it? Who are so oft told of Damnation, and yet run into it? in a word, who might have God for their Friend, and had rather have him for their Enemy.

4. The next Head of *Motives*, by which I might inforce this Duty of Acquaintance with God, may be taken from the Examples of them which made all the Friends they can to get acquainted with God. Behold a Cloud of Witnesses, which do all with one consent speak high in the commendation of this Friend, that I am perswading you all that I can to be acquainted with. Are you wiser than all your Neighbours, is the ignorant Objection of some that would take it very heinously, if we should call them Fools, when we put them upon a serious diligence in pursuit of the best things? Why, let me retort this Objection upon themselves, are you wiser then *Enoch* and *Noah*? Have you more understanding than *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*? Have you more wit than *David*? Are you wiser than *Heman*, *Daniel*, and many others of those brave Worthies, which were the Wonders of the world, the Non-suches of their Pge, and a Pattern to future Generations? This was the greatest piece of their Wisdom to walk with God, this was the best of their policy to get so potent an Allie; this spake them to be men of

a deeper reach, and a larger understanding than others, because they made it their business to get acquainted with God, and thus to make their interest as large as Heaven, and their peace and prosperity as sure as the Oath of a God could make it. Do you think that all these men were mistaken? Did their Wisdom lie only in a prudent management of their wordly affairs to their best Advantage? what then, did they mean some of them to leave all that they had so cheerfully upon the command of God? Dare you say that they prized the Favour of God at too high a rate? As for their parts, they thought they could never value such a Friend as God too much. What else was the meaning of their longing, panting, and breathing after him? Why else are they so glad of his Company, his Presence? How loath were they to do any thing that might be in the least displeasing to him? What bitter Moans did they make, if he did but withdraw a while, if he did but a little absent himself from them? How wonderful desirous were they of enjoying communion with him? How earnest to live in his House for ever? Dare you say that they were all fools and mad men for refusing the embraces of this present World, for slighting its smiles, and undervaluing its greatest kindnesses, and choosing that favour of God, though with the scorns and reproches of the World, rather than to hazard his anger, whose Wrath burns to the bottom of Hell. Behold, what a glorious Company as these stand upon Mount Zion with Harps in their hands, with those hundred and forty and four Thousand, and the Lamb with an innumerable multitude of all Nations, People, and

and Languages. Why all these were of the Friends and acquaintance of God, or else they had never had these Crowns, Roses, and Palms in their Hands. Now, why should not our Souls be as dear to us as theirs was to them? Will not Heaven be as good for us as them? Is it not as needful for us to get a Friend of God, as them? Will not God do as much for us as them, if we will but do as they did, Walk with him? The Truth of it is, the number of them which are saved is but few, in comparison of the Multitudes of them which know not God, and go the broad way; yet for all that, take them absolutely, they are abundance; so many that the Scripture saith they are innumerable. Do but Read over the History of some of their Lives, turn over the holy Records, look sometimes into those Sacred Chronicles, and behold how cheerfully they served God, how actively they followed the Lamb whersoever he goes, through thick and thin. Hear what their Language is now they are got home safe, now Christ hath brought them to Glory, and they are at their Friends House, What do they talk of? What is their Discourse about? Do they complain what a sad journey they had of it through a howling Wilderness, after they had passed the Red-Sea, through a thousand Sorrows and Trials? Do they say, that now they are at their journeys end, that they are weary, and wish they had never taken so long and tedious a journey? do they not rather speak the quite contrary, & that if it were to do again they would do it with far more speed and cheerfulness than they did? Listen, Hark, methinks I hear them from the Walls of the *New Jerusalem* Crying out, Come away

away, come away, fall on bravely, follow your businels gallantly but a little while longer, and the City is your own; fetch your Scaling Ladders, run up apace, mount the Rampiers, fear nothing though the Devil play his Artillery upon them, yet it is but powder, he shall never give you a mortal Wound; resist him and he will fly, and the Field is yours; the Spoil, the Crown, the Honour will pay for your pains, blood, and danger. Fall on brave Souls, fall on; the Valianter you be, the more safe you are. Methinks I hear those Noble Saints encouraging of you to get acquaintance with God, and saying to you that are yet afar off, come near. Come away poor souls, come away, what do you mean thus to delay? O little do you think what a friend we now find of God; it was but a little, a very little that was told us of the Excellency of Christ, and the glories of this place, to what we experience; It was no false report that we heard when we was upon earth, of the Happines of Heaven: O here's a prize worth the running for; a Kingdom, a Crown worth the fighting for, an Estate worth the looking after. We have not now our stint; we are not dieted with those Spiritual Dainties, we have not now and then a sip, a draught, a bit in a corner, but we are at the Fountain, we are daily feasted with infinite Pleasures, our hearts are full, -brim-full, they run over, we swim in an Ocean of spiritual enjoyments; these things are beyond your Capacity now to understand. Were we to live upon earth again, and did we know what we do now know, we should ever pine with our earnest longing for God, the living God, to be in his immediate presence, and to bear that

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angelical work of Praising, Serving, and Loving him for ever. Wherefore brethren, let us encourage one another, *Come let us go up to the house of the Lord ; his dwelling is in Salem, his palace is upon Mount Zion.* Why should not we go on as merrily in the pathes of Wisdom, as the wicked in the Road of Hell ? How do the Devils Champions Encourage and hearten one another up ? How do they Laugh, Sing and Roar, as if their Life were the only Life ; for shame let's tell them they lye in their teeth. Who hath the best company, they or we ? The Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and thousands of Martyrs are gone Singing before ; some of our dear Relations, Fathers, Brethren and Sisters are newly welcomed by Christ to his Fathers house ; and they are blessing that Rich Mercy that hath Conducted them to such a Place, to such a Friend ! We have many Thousands of Saints Militant that are going along with us as fast as they can, and God himself will bear us company ; and why do we yet Linger ? O that we were upon the Wing ! O that our Souls were like the Chariots of *Aminadab* ! O that the Lord would strengthen poor short-winded Creatures ? O that we could run and not be weary, and walk and not faint ! O that we might have now and then a hearty meal, and that in the strength of them we could travel to the mount of God ! O that that acquaintance might now be happily begun, which may never have an end ! O that God would visit us oft, and get into our hearts ! O that he that gave those Worthies in former times so much grace, would pour out of the same grace in abundance upon our souls ! O that he would shed abroad his love in our Hearts ! O that

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we could maintain a constant intercourse with him here till we come to a perfect enjoyment of him in glory hereafter! O that we may see thy face, thy blessed face by faith! O that thou wouldest cause thy glory to pass before us! O that thy marvellous loving kindness might be made known to a company of poor Creatures of us, whose desire is to fear thee, who would fain love thee with the strength of our Souls! O blessed are they that love thee, that are beloved by thee!

5. I might also insist upon another Head of *Motives*, which is named in the Text, which is this, *Acquaint now thy self with him, and thou shalt be at peace.* Though there be nothing but War on every side, you shall have peace. This peace of God, whatsoever you may think of it, is unspeakably advantageous; the benefits that would accrue to a soul upon this peace are infinite; It is a *peace that passeth all understanding.* When we have this peace concluded, we may drive a brave Trade without disturbance for the richest Commodities. If we were thus acquainted with God, we shall have such a peace as that we may laugh at the shaking of the spear, and not be much disturbed when we hear of dreadful things abroad in the World. He that is acquainted with God may safely venture up and down, he hath Gods pass, a strong man of war for his convoy; he hath such powerful allies that he need not fear; as long as he is at peace with God, he is sure not to be quite overcome by man. He is at peace with himself, when the Air echoes with Drums and Trumpets, and the roaring of Guns, a musick that pleaseth the Devils

Devils Ear; He may still rejoyce, because he hath a bird within, which sings sweetly; there is a harmony between his Will and Gods, a harmony between his heart and his mouth. This is no such contemptible thing, and if you knew what a wounded Spirit, a fire in the bosom is, you would say so. This peace that such a one hath, is a well-grounded peace; not such a one as is built upon ignorance, and hardness of heart; but such a pardon as results from the sence of the pardon of Sin, and Reconciliation with God, through the blood of Christ; that blood of Christ hath washed his conscience from dead works. Sins he had, and hath, but some of them he sees lying dead like the Egyptians upon the shore, others striving for life, with a deaths wound upon them; and though he have enemies still living, yet they are such as shall never have the absolute dominion over him: As long as the great quarrel between him and God is at an end, all is well enough, the Law hath nothing against him, all his accusers are silenced; Christ hath fulfilled and satisfied the Law for him; The great Creator hath given a full and general acquittance, all debts are discharged for him, and therefore the man hath little reason to trouble his head much with cares and fears; now he may go up and down any where, and not fear the Serjeant, his noble surety hath paid that vast debt, he hath laid down the ten thousand Talents upon the Nail, so that the man is at peace with God; he is also at peace with all the Creatures in the world, from the glorious Angels that are in Heaven, to the meanest insect or plant; they are so far from doing him any real harm, that they all are Servants

vants to the Friends of God, they all stand ready to oppose their Enemies; and those of them that are mortal are ready to lay down their lives for one that stands thus related to God. For when any enters into Covenant with God, God also makes a Covenant for them with the beasts of the field. Great peace have they that love Gods law, and nothing shall offend them; such a one is at peace with Death and the Grave. We read of some profane Monsters that made a Covenant with Death, & were at an Agreement with Hell: but this Covenant will soon be broken, because he that hath the keys of Death and Hell, the power of Life and Death, never subscribed to the Articles of their Agreement. But now the godly man hath a Friend that hath made a Covenant for him, a firm Covenant with Death, and Hell, so that none of them shall ever do him the least wrong. As for Death, Christ hath took out it's Sting: as for the Grave, Christ hath spiced, and season'd it, it's Power is master'd, it's Terribleness is taken away! It's now no prison, Christ hath opened the doors of it, and now it is but a Chamber of repose, a bed to rest in; and he that hath already Opened this Door, when it was Bolted, Barr'd, and Double-locked, can and will ere long Open it again, and awaken his from their sleep; and is this Inconsiderable? Is not such a peace as this is, desirable? Who that is well in his wits, would not be glad to be in so secure a Condition as this peace will put him in? And who are like to have the benefit of this peace, but the Friends of God! O therefore if you value your own peace, if you would be undisturb'd from storms without, and Heart-quakes within;

within : If you would have all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, at peace with you : If you would have Death unstung, and the Grave a Chamber, and not a Prison, why then, get acquainted with God, and you shall be at peace.

6. The next head of *Motives*, I might make from these words, *Thereby good shall come unto you, Acquaint your self with him, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you.* But I shall here be but brief. Think of what you will that is good for you, and if you are acquainted with God, you will have it for asking for ; or that which is far better than that which you desire : For the Lord God is a Sun, and a Shield, he will give Grace and Glory, & no good thing will he with-hold from them which walk uprightly ; that is, from those that are acquainted with him. All his ways are mercy and truth, to such as be in covenant with him ; and all shall work together for good, to them that love him. Inlarge thy desires as wide as the Heavens, request what you will, ask never so much, and you shall have it ; And what would you have more ? If it be the good of profit that you desire ; What greater gain than Godliness ? Who can give such rewards to his Servants as God ? Who will give greater Portions to his Children than this Father ? Who is like to thrive better than he, who hath such a vast stock, such a great Trade, such quick and great returns ; and above all, such a Partner ? O that those that are all for profit and gain, that cry out, what advantage shall it be to me, if I serve God ? and what profit to me, if I am acquainted with him ? O that such would

but do that which will be most for their profit, I would desire no more of them than this. O that they would but try what a gainful Trade Religion in it's power is ! The greatest Merchants that ever walked the Exchange, if they be not acquainted with God, and have not Christ for their Factor, are but Pedlars to the Saints. One that is acquainted with God, gets more in one Hour, in one Prayer, at one Sermon, in one Meditation, then all the Rich Men of the World are worth, put all their Estates together : One receives his Peace, the other his Pounds, the one hath by way of Return, a great deal of troublesome Lumber, the other his Box of precious Pearls, and a Jewel of an infinite Value. O little doth the laborious World think what poor and small Gains his are, when he gets most, to what this Spiritual Merchant gets ; he would not sell what he gets sometimes in one Morning, for all the Riches of both the *Indies*. He Trades in such Commodities which will not suffer Damage upon the Sea : His Vessel is light and strong ; the Master of it never made a losing Voyage. All his Wares are unvaluable ; and though his Ship be in many a dreadful Storm, though some times she be becalm'd, though it be long before she returns ; yet as long as she hath such Provisions within, such a Pilot, such Anchors she can't miscarry ; she will come into the Harbour Richly Laden : The World will not believe this ; but I am sure there is never a Man breathing, but will sooner say, That no Gain is like the Gain of Christ and Glory. One Return from Heaven, one Answer of Prayer, one Smile from God, one Look of Love, the Head of one *Goliath*, the Death of one Sin, one Soul

Soul brought home to Christ, one drooping soul comforted, is a greater Mercy (for all the ignorant world make nothing of such things as these) that to be invested with the greatest Honours, then to be possessed of all the Riches, than to enjoy all the Pleasures that the whole World can afford. But O were mens eyes opened, were men within sight of those devouring Flames, then they would believe, that Christ were worth the having, Grace is a Pearl that cannot be over-valued, and no Trade is comparable to a Spiritual Merchant, no Art like that, by which one may turn every thing into Gold. But if it be the good of pleasure you look more after; can there be greater pleasures then those which are in the presence of God? Can there be any greater pleasures, than to rejoyce in God, and to be made welcome by him; than to drink Flagons of that excellent Liquor, which is better than wine; Can there be better Musick, than to hear so many Millions of sweet Voices singing *Halelujabs!* O There's a Confort! There's melody indeed! If you desire that other good, the good of Honesty, a rare accomplishment, perfection of Grace, purity of Soul; wherewithall shall a young man choose his ways, but by taking heed thereto, according to his word. Well then, lay all these *Motives* together, and let's see whether they will any whit prevail. If the nature of the person with whom I would fain have you acquainted, if all these admirable qualities that are in him (if I may so call them) may signifie any thing; if all those glorious effects of acquaintance with God weigh any thing with you, one would think by this time you should be well resolved. If the

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danger of not being acquainted with God, may make you afraid of standing it out; if Good or Evil, if Peace or War, if Life or Death, If all this be as much as nothing, what then is something? If the frequent pleading of Meréy, if the Blood of Christ have any Voice, if the Expostulations of his Embassadors may be Heard, Why should you not then be Perswaded? If all this will not move you what can we say more? If we could shew you Heaven, and the Glories of another World, could we let you see the Face of Christ, could we any way in the world reach your Hearts, and perswade you by any means to mind the things of Eternal peace, we would do it with all our Hearts. If we were sure to get you with us, and to bring you Acquainted with God, we could willingly come begging on our bare knees to you, and beseech you to be reconciled to God. We see that dismal day a coming, and are grieved to think, what a sad taking you would be in then; we know the case will then be altered with them, which will not be perswaded to be reconciled to God. O what a woful condition will they be in, which have heard or read these Sermons, and yet for all that, would not mind the looking after acquaintance with God! How will such wish that they had never been born, or that they had their being in some of the dark savage corners of the World, where they might never have heard of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, being Acquainted with God, and Union with Christ, Peace with their Offended Maker, rather than having heard of these things to make light of them! O to hear of such a Friend, and to have him for an Enemy; to hear of Peace, and to choose War;

War; to hear of Heaven, and go to Hell, this is sad indeed. It would have been far better for such, that they had never known the ways of God, than after they had known them, to go in the ways of Folly. O that men and women had but such serious thoughts of these things as they will have ere long! O that they would but believe Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity to be such Realities as shortly they will! O that mens hearts were but affected with things, as they will be when their Souls are just a going, or a little after they are in another World! But O the miserable condition of the World! O the lamentable state of Professors, that make no more of the favour or displeasure of God! Nay, may I not say, O the Folly of the Children of God themselves, that are no more in Gods company, when they know they may be so welcome, when they have tasted so oft of his kindness, when they were made so much of the last time that they gave him a Visit. Are not men in a deep sleep, that they do not hear? Are they not Blind, that they do not see? Are they not Ignorant, Foolish, and Mad, that they do not understand their Interest any better? It is not without good reason, that the Spirit of God doth so oft cry out upon sinners for their Folly; the Scripture saith not in vain, *That there is none that hath understanding, no not one.* No wonder that they which have but half a cure, see men like Trees; that those which never had a through work, do not prize Christ. O but that those which have been brought Nigh by Grace, who were sometimes afar off, that such should be so much strangers; for those that have met with such kind entertainment at his house, for

these to keep off so, to come so seldom, for them which have Fed so High at the Kings Table, to fall to their Trash, their Husks, this is a shame indeed; as if the Devil kept a better House than God. Christians, doth God deserve this at your hands? How unkindly do you think he takes this from you? What will the World say? Look how his own Acquaintance despise him? How will the Devil insult? O how do the Hearts of your fellow-Christians ake, to see how strange your Carriage is? How do they tremble to think, what if that fine House be Built upon the Sands? Christians, you which seldom or complementally Visit God, bethink your selves well what you do, when you begin to be cold in your Affections to this Friend; remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first Works; remember what entertainment you have sometimes had at Gods House; forget not all his Kindnesses; of all the Creatures in the World, you have no cause to carry your selves so towards God. I tell you again, the World stands by, and looks on, to see what there is in you more than in others; they mark your lives more than you are aware of, it may be: Wherefore look to your selves, take heed how you carry your selves before them. O why should they see your faces pale, when you may feed so highly? O shew them by your Countenance, that you feed upon wholesome Food! O let your Breath smell sweet, let your Discourse be more savoury of the things of God! Labour to maintain a sweet, constant, uninterrupted, in-
tercourse

tercourse with God, to walk with him. O little do you think what you lose by your coming so seldome to this Friend. I appeal to your own Experience ; was not that dish you eat at his Table sweet? And what do you think that God doth not still keep as good a House as he did ? Do you believe that he hath spent all his best Wines? Can that Fountain ever be emptied ? Is there not Bread and good Chear enough in your Fathers house? Believe it, God hath other kind of Entertainment, Richer Chear, better Fare still to make you welcome with, if you would not be so strange, if you would but come oftener to him. As for Christians, methinks I need not use so many words to perswade you , methinks you that know how sweet his company is, should desire never to be out of it. Christians, I tell you plainly, if you ever expect true peace in your Life, and true joy and comfort at Death, it's your only way to keep close to God, visit him oft by secret Prayer and other kind of Duties, and then you shall ever and anon meet with that which will sweeten your greatest diligence , and abundantly make amends for your pains. Knock at his door, ask for him, and resolve to stay till he comes; though he come not at the first, second, or third knocking, yet I am sure he is within, and will come at last, if you will but wait; and when you have once again met with him, O let him not go, but tell him seriously that you can't bear his absence, he shall be your God and Friend living and dying, death, it self shall not part you. Go also and tell your

Friends, you have found him whom your Soul
 loves, that you have met with Jesus, and see if
 you can get them too, to come out and see him, bid
 them to taste and see how good the Lord is; com-
 mend him all you can to your poor Christ-less
 Friends. But you are not the persons that I in-
 tended to speak to, only thus a little by the by,
 that I may a little warm my own heart and yours,
 in this great duty of maintaining an intimate
 close converse and acquaintance with God. But
 my business is to go out into the high ways and
 Hedges, and to invite poor wandering strangers
 that have nothing to live upon themselves, and
 that do not know what a noble open-house God
 keeps, that never tasted of his kindness in Christ,
 to come to this Royall Feast, and to Eat their fill
 of such food as they can never eat too much of,
 never be surfeited with. *Unto you, O men, I call,*
and my voice is unto the Sons of men. O ye simple
ones, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of
an understanding heart, Prov. 8. 4 5. Hear O
ye Deaf, and see O Blind: let the dead hear the voice
of God, and live. Then hear what I have been
 speaking of: I have almost done my message, con-
 sider well of these things, as you tender the dis-
 pleasure of God, as you value your Souls, be se-
 rious; remember what it is, that I have been dis-
 coursing to you about; Read it over again, and
 study on it; Read and Pray, Pray and Read,
 and turn this exhortation into Prayer; take with
 you Words, and say: O that this might be the
 Sermon that might bring me acquainted with
 God! O that this might be the man that might
 bring me to some knowledg of Christ! O that
 this might be the happy day wherein a Match
 may

may be concluded between my soul, and the precious Jesus! But alas, alas, where are the hearts that are thus smitten? Where are the Souls that are any whit taken with this infinit Beauty? How few have any real love or good-will for Christ? O who hath believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Though I and many hundreds more, have been pleading thus with Sinners; though some of their Embassadors of Peace weep bitterly, that their message is no more kindly entertained, though their publick Preaching be followed with private Prayers & secret Groans; though they expostulate the case with poor refractory Creatures, with all the earnestness that they can for their Lives, though we use the most Powerfull Arguments that we can, and deliver them with all the Vehemency, Seriousness and Compassion that we can for our Souls; Yet how are the greatest part of our hearers unconcerned? Is not a great part of our Auditory as stupid and senseless as the very Stones they tread on? The more is our sorrow; we fear as to the most of them that hear us, what we speak, is lost. It may be they may be a little affected just at the hearing, or for an hour or two; but O that these Truths might have a lively, and abiding impression on mens hearts! I fear, O that they were causeless Fears! I fear that most of you that have heard of these things will go away, and quickly forget what weighty things you have heard; perhaps some of you may say, the man was very earnest, and some of his Expressions were piercing. O Friends, I hope it is not your commendation that I desire? O that I may with a single heart, respect Gods Glory? I say

say again, I would not be pleased with your
 praise, nor would I fear your dispraise; it's your
 Souls I want and may but I manage my great
 work in this successfully, and see you acquainted
 with God, before I leave you for ever, I hope I
 should be contented to be trod in the dirt. O
 that my heart may not deceive me! O that my
 compassion to your Souls were greater, a thou-
 sand times greater! O that I could never speak
 to you of such things as these without tears. I
 must again, and again, profess I am ashamed of
 my heart, that it is no more sensible of these
 weighty affairs! But O Mighty, and Glorious
 God, if thou pleasest, thou canst out of the mouth
 of a Babe and Suckling, ordain strength! O that
 thou wouldest make the worm *Jacob* to thresh
 Mountains! O that thou wouldest make use of
 the most unworthy and weakest instrument, in
 that honourable service of bringing home some
 Souls to thyself. O if but any one Soul, if but
 one Soul that was estranged from God, might by
 these lines be brought acquainted with him, if I
 might prevail with any other stubborn Enemy
 to lay down his weapons, and be Friends with
 him, I should think my pains well bestowed;
 though (if that will make you to regard it ever
 the more) this work hath cost me many an
 hours study, and it hath been interrupted with
 many Bodily Distempers, Groans and Sorrows,
 Fears and Sighs. Yet if after all my travel, I may
 hear of any Children born of God; if I may
 meet but one Soul the better for it, by it brought
 to Glory, I shall have abundant cause to bless
 my God, and to rejoyce that my labour hath not
 been in vain in the Lord. But if I might have
 more,

more, I should have more cause to adore infinite Goodness, and rich Grace! O my dear Friends! O precious and immortal Souls! What shall I say to you? What shall I do for you? O did you but know how hardly I fetch my Breath at this time, did you but see what a crazy Creature he is that writes to you; did you but know how faint he hath been sometimes in speaking to you, you would go nigh to pity him. O pity your selves! O pity your own Souls, that ere long must be turned naked out of your Bodies, and hear the Expostulations of a dying man that would gladly Live with you in everlasting Glory, and meet you all among the Friends of the Bridegroom, that I may see you among the Sons of God, in your great meeting, when the Father shall send his Servants the Angels to fetch all his Children home to his own House. O pity your Souls, and let not all my pains be lost, trample not under your Feet the blood of the Covenant, neither count it a common thing: Remember that the slighting of Christ is a dangerous thing; the loss of his Favour, and the loss of your Soul, must go together! O how shall I leave you! How shall I part with you, shall I go before my work is done? What shall I say more? what Arguments shall I further make use of? O that I knew what to say, that I might prevail! And are you still resolved to put me off with frivolous Excuses? Can you put off your Consciences thus? Are you still contented to be Aliens and Strangers? If you are, know this, that I must leave these Lines to bear Witness against you; Remember this, that you were told of these things again and again. Those that can forget Sermons

here, shall remember them hereafter? if you be not the better for this Discourse, you will curse the day that ever you heard it; it will be a cutting reflection, when another day you shall say to your own Soul, at such a time, such a one did beseech me in Christs stead to be reconciled to God, and I would not: Cursed man that I was! I made nothing of all the offers of Grace and Mercy, I made little account of these intolerable Torments which now make me to gnash my Teeth. Hear, O unhappy Creatures that are yet alive, Be not ye past hope! O that thou mayest see thy sad state before it be quite past remedy! O let me take up a Lamentation for thee, as one whose condition is beyond Expression Deplorable! O that I could speak as affectionately to you as one did lately, who spent his strength and life amongst you all, viz. That I can neither eat nor drink, nor sleep quietly, whilst I think of the danger that precious souls run every moment, whilst they are unacquainted with God! O that mine eyes were Waters, and my Head a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night for poor Christ-less Creatures, that laugh and are as chearful as if no danger were near them, whereas that dismal Day approaches apace, wherein they must bid an everlasting farewell to all their Pleasures, and lie down for ever under the scalding wrath of an angry God! O stand astonished O Heavens, and wonder O Earth! Here's a man that had rather be a Beast than a man, a Devil than a Saint, that prefers Hell before Heaven, that loves Death and hates Life; Here's a man that makes nothing of going to Hell, Damnation is a thing that he jests with; 'tis but

dammage

damning, he saith : But damning ! Is that so light a thing, a thing to be laughed at ? Well, if that damning be nothing, never complain of it, when you feel it : If it be nothing, never groan nor bite your Tongue, nor Gnash your Teeth for it ; If Heaven, and your Soul the Favour of God, eternal happiness, be such small matters, never complain for the loss of them. Well then, belike you are pleased very well with your choise, and you do choose rather to enjoy the pleasures of Sin, for a moment, than the pleasures of Holiness, which last for ever. There stands a Sinner that hears all this, and Frets and Foameth at the Hearing of it ; it's a Torture to his Soul to be within the sound of such Truths ? Why, act like one in his wits : If the hearing of Hell and Damnation be so troublesome, what will the feeling of it be, think'st thou ? But that I may, if possible, prevail, I shall leave a few serious Questions with you, which I charge you in the presence of God, seriously to consider of, and to give a wise Answer to these following Questions.

Quest. 1. Are those things which you have heard, true, or are they not ? Doth not the Scriptures speak the same things which I do ? Dare you say that the Word of Truth is False ? Do but open the Bible, dip where you will, what is that you read there ? Is it not something that hath a Tendency to what I have been teaching of ? O that you would but give your selves the trouble of searching the Scriptures, and see whether these things are so. To what purpose do you think should we spend our breath ? To what purpose should we follow you with such Exhortations, if we had not some grounds for what
 we

we say? If there be no such thing in the word of God, why then do you not say so? Why, do you not shew us it, if there be such a place that faith, there is no need of repentance, that mans condition is safe enough already, and that he may do well enough, though he be never reconciled to God? Do you think that we take delight in vexing men and women? Do you conceive that it pleaseth us to displease you, and to get your hatred? Do you not believe that a great many of us, if it might consist with Gods honour and your welfare, had not far rather be excused? Can any man imagine that so many thousands of Prophets, Apostles, and Ministers, in such distant ages, and in such distant places, should all agree in this, to impose a falsity upon the world? Would any man be so mad as to invent such things as these, which are so contrary to mens dispositions, if he had not abundant warrant from God himself? Is it possible that men should make such complaints, and shed so many tears, and be in such agonies about these things, if there were nothing at all in them? Are all the experiences of so many thousands of Saints, but meer fancies? Speak Christian, speak, What do you say to this? Are all thy joys, thy answers of Prayers, those sweet dishes that thou hast sometimes fed upon, but dreams? Doth not thy very blood stir in thee, at the very putting such a question to thee? Canst thou not say, that thou hast seen, that thou hast felt, and that thou hast known undoubtedly, that Spiritual things are realities, the greatest realities in the world, and that thou hast been as much affected with them as ever thou wert with the things of sense? Let me, the meanest

meanest of ten thousand, tell the stiffest Atheist in the world, that I have seen these things so realized, that I shall sooner believe that I am turned to a stone, or am dead, than believe that Spirituals are nullities and fancies. I am confident if there be any credit to be given to both eyes and ears, then these things are true ; and had you seen but what I have seen in dying Saints, and heard what I have heard, you would easily have been convinced, that there is something in communion with God, something in Spiritual Joys. I am sure, if there be any truth in the Scriptures, if the word of God be true, if Christ and the Apostles were not all mistaken, then these things are true. If I should tell you a business that did concern your House, or your Children, or Body, or any worldly thing whatever, upon my own personal knowledge, would you not readily assent to what I say ? I am perswaded you would be far from suspecting the truth of what I affirmed ; I am ready to think, that there is none of you all that think that I dare tell you that which is false. O then, Why will you not believe me in a business of far greater Consequence ? And if you ask me to what purpose do I spend so much time for nothing ? What need I speak at this rate ? What, will I make Infidels of you all ? What, do I think that you are such Atheists, as not to believe that the word of God is true ? Well then, you your selves are witnesses that the word of God is true, and that you do believe all that is contained in it ; and by rational inferences deduced from it : I shall therefore take it for granted, that you give your assent to these things, if you be Christians in profession, your very Name speaks as much ;

much. Now my next Question shall be this.

Quest. 2. Are these things of weight and importance, or are they not? You hear that they are matters that concern your Eternal Life or Death, Soul affairs; and are not these matters of the greatest consequence? If acquaintance with God, the happiness or misery of a Soul, your making or undoing for ever, be inconsiderable things, what then are great things? Is it a matter of greater importance, to lose the sight of a lascivious Play; Is it an affair of greater weight to have the frowns of a wanton mistress, or the frown of a God? You said even now, that the word of God was true, if you will stand to that, I desire no more; How is it written? Read a verse or two, turn to Mathew 5. 20. *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* And John. 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* And God will pour out his wrath upon the Heathen, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name. Doth not the Scripture say, that is the one thing necessary? Are not these things called by the Lord Christ, the weightier things? *Mat. 23. 23.* I hope you will not say, that God is mistaken, and that the Scripture speaks more of these matters than needs: What are you gone from your word so soon? did not you say that the word of God was true, and are you now of another mind, because you find that it requires more strictness, you are willing to submit to? But are you ashamed of that, and are you convinced of this also, that the Doctrine of recon-

Reconciliation, Acquaintance, and Peace with God, are affairs of the highest importance in the World? And do you indeed believe this? and will you stand to it? Well then, my next Question shall be this.

Quest. 3. What do you mean then to mind such things as you acknowledge to be most unquestionably true, and of the greatest consequence, with so much indifferency and coldness? What reason have you then for your strange neglect in your prosecution of them? What, say they are the greatest things in the world, and will you say they are least to be looked after? Is it any Prudence and Wisdom to be very serious about trifles, and to trifle about the most serious things? Are Heaven, the love of God, and the like, by your own confession the most weighty, and will you make light of them? O folly and Hypocrisie! *Out of thy own mouth thou shalt be condemned.* Dost know that Heaven and Hell are before you? Dost thou know that the one is unspeakably glorious, and the other unspeakably dreadful? and yet for all this dost thou stand demurring which of these thou shouldest choose? and darest thou for all this venture on in a way which leads to the region of Eternal Darkness? and though those that know the way better than you, and see you ride out so hastily and merrily, call after you with earnestness, yet dost thou still turn thy back upon them? Consider whether you act in these affairs, like one that is well in his Wits. Is God the best friend in the World, and yet his kindness least to be regarded? Man, what hast thou to say for thy self? O What bruits, and how irrational are men in their spiritual matters? How

do they contradict themselves ! How do they say one thing, and do the quite contrary ! O let me in a word or two renew my Expostulation with them which are loath to be accounted fools ! What reason hast thou to undervalue the favour of God so as you do ? What reason have you thus foolishly to cast away your selves, and to slight acquaintance with your Maker ? Let me plead with you in the language of a Reverend Divine (*R. B.*) of our own. Look up your best and strongest Reasons; and if you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you'l marvell at it: but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop *Cranmer* had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a Leg or an Arm, it's a sad sight; but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man doth it to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with Strapado's and Racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered: this is a hard case to flesh and blood, but this a man may have good reason for, as you see in *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred Martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, for a man to run into the fire of Hell when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he might be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in it, that is reason indeed, to justifie or excuse it. For Heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour that we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven. Read on in *Mr. R B's Call to the Unconverted* pag. 169. Do you still believe the Word of God
to

to be true, and the things contained in it to be the most weighty, and yet will you still pass them over, as if there were nothing at all in them?

Quest. 4. My next Question that I shall propound to you, and desire your serious and speedy answer to, is this, Do you believe that you can find a better friend then God? can you mend your self any where else? Is there in Heaven or Earth any that can do as much for you as God can? Is there any one that can take you off when you come to be accused for High Treason against the King of Heaven, and to be arraigned before that just Judge? have you got that which will quit your cost in getting of it, and countervail the loss of a Soul? What is it that still hath an interest in your heart, that is thought to be an equal competitor with God for your dearest love? If it be indeed that which will shield you from the arrests of Death, and the wrath of the Almighty; if it be that which can shelter you from the storm of his displeasure; if it be that which will do you as much good as Heaven, and make you as happy as God can; Why then I have little to say; make your best of it. But consider well what you do first, be sure that you be not mistaken; have not many thought as you think, and have found their mistake when it was too late?

Quest. 5. Do you think that this world will last always with you? Do you not believe that ere long you must die, and your soul appear before God, and by him be sentenced to its everlasting state? Where is all the glory of those great Monarchs which despised God, and oppressed his people? what become of all their pomps? which

of them that flourished three thousand years ago stand alive now in glory? And are you better than they? Shall the worms which have made a prey of them, spare you? Is death more favourable now-a-days, than he was before? Is not the world still as it was, but Vanity? Is not all flesh still but grass, and the beauty of it as a flower that is cut down and withereth suddenly? Well then, this being granted, that nothing is more certain than Death, and that it is appointed for all men once to die, would you not then be glad of something that will stand you in stead after death, a Friend in another World? Why then do you not speedily get acquainted with him who alone can be-friend you in that dreadful hour?

Quest. 6. What do you think will become of you, if after all this you go on in your old ways? What will become of you do you think if you should die without the knowledge of God? What hopes have you of life in peace, if you bid defiance to the Lord of life, and contemn the Prince of peace? How shall you escape if you neglect so great Salvation? What do you think that those which did once as you do now, slight Christ, and never look after Reconciliation with God, are now a doing in another World? What would you do in this case? Should one come to you either out of Heaven, or out of Hell, how wonderfully do you think you should be affected with the Narration which they would give you of the affairs of the invisible world? Why then will you not now be affected with what we say? for assure your selves, whatever you may think our testimony is as true, and hath a better foundation of credit, than if one should tell you he came

came from the dead, and speak to you of these things.

Quest. 7. Another Question I would propound to you, is this; Are you willing to bear the displeasure of God? can you undergo the weight of that wrath which made his back to ache, who was mighty to do and suffer? can you with any patience hear that dreadful Word pronounced by the mouth of that Judge, which will see to the execution of his sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting torment; Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I know you not?* Can you endure without any trouble that scalding hot wrath which is abundantly more painful than Fire and Brimstone, more intolerable than to be shut up in a burning fiery Furnace, or to be boyled in a Caldron of melted Lead, or whatsoever torments the Wit of men or Devils can invent? Can you with any patience bear the Stone, Gout, Tooth-ach, Collick, or some such distempers of body which last but for a while? O how long do you think the time when you are in that condition? How do you tosse and tumble? What lamentable moando you make? Do not you think you can't be too much pittied in that condition? How then will you be able to lie down in those torments, the least drop of which is abundantly more painful than the greatest torment that ever you felt in your life? If these seem dreadful to you, why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an interest in him who hath the Keys of Hell at his girdle; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, to them that are brought into a state of Reconciliation and Acquaintance with God by his Son our Mediator.

Quest. 8. Are you contented to lose everlasting happiness? Can you willingly see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and a great many from all the quarters of the world, to sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your selves cast out? How do you like to have those which you scorned to look upon, to be set at the Table at the Feast, and your self shut out with the Dogs? would you not be glad to have a word of comfort spoke to you, when your soul is just a taking its leave of your body? Would you not be glad then to be conveyed by the blessed Angels into the presence of God, and to be crowned with an immortal and glorious Crown? Would it do you any harm to be perfect in holiness and happiness when you die? Would you not be glad to be saved when others shall be damned? In a word, do you not desire to be rejoicing and praising of God in endless pleasures, when others shall be weeping and cursing of God in endless torments? Why then do not you live the lives of the righteous, if you would die their deaths, and have your latter end like theirs? if you would be glorious and happy for ever, why do you not endeavour to be holy and spiritual in time? if you would have God your Friend in another world, what do you mean that you labour no more to be acquainted with him in this world?

Quest. 9. How would you take it at any mans hands, to be served as you serve God? Suppose you should take up a poor Child that came to your door to beg, that had scarce a rag to cover his nakedness, nor a morsel of bread to put into his mouth, and no where to hide his head; Suppose you should strip this Poor beggar of his rags,

and

and cloath him in very good apparel, and take him into your own house, and take as much care of him, as if he were your own child: suppose after this, you should bid him do you some small piece of service, and he in stead of It, should say, *Command your man, and do your work your self*; and instead of answering your kindness, should offer you the greatest abuse in the world, and afterwards conspire with a company of Rogues to rob and murder you, how would you like this? should you think that such a fellow as this did not deserve a halter rather than your favour? But now, if after this you should send after this ungrateful wretch, and tell him, that you are willing to forget all that is past, and to receive him into the greatest favour, and never to cast his former wickedness in his teeth; how would you take it at his hands, if he should stand I know not how long disputing whether he should accept of your kindness or no, whether he should choose the Gaol, and Gallows, or your House? but if after all this you should send messenger after messenger, and offer to give him all that you have in the World, and to bestow your only Daughter upon him, and to settle presently a great Estate upon him with her; how would you take it, if this vile, ungratefull begger should put you off a great while together with some poor excuse or other? How would you like it if he should make light of all your offers, and tell you, he thanks you for nothing, and should undervalue your kindness? Would you not soon resolve not to trouble your self any longer with such an unthankful monster? Would you not let him take his course, and not much pity him, if he afterwards see the dif-

ference between a Fathers house and a Gaol, between Liberty and a Prison, between Riches, Glory and Pleasure, and Poverty, Dishonour and Sorrows? Would you not bid him never expect kindness more at your hands; but seeing he would not be ruled, to take what follows? What do you say, would you not do thus? I am perswaded you would. But should I unriddle this Parable, who do you think would be condemned? Your own mouth would accuse you, and you would be your own Judge. Thou art that man that hast dealt thus disingeniously with God, thou art that begger to whom the Lord hath shewed much kindness, and offered more; he hath sent Messenger after Messenger, and at last he hath sent his Son to invite thee to his own house, and he offers to make you as happy as Heaven, Glory, and Happiness it self can make you, and you stand still demurring, and add one delay to another, and are far from that gratefull and speedy compliance which the nature of the thing doth require; and in stead of coming at Gods call, and a thankfull owning of his marvellous kindness, how basely dost thou prefer thy company, thy lust before him, and offer the most intollerable affronts to his Majesty, and make nothing of his unparalleld goodness, and continuest in open rebellion against him? What then hast thou to say for thy self, why God should not with a just abhorrency cast thee off for ever? But now that God should still offer thee as high as ever, and (instead of doing as I have said, and as you your self would have done in case of a less contempt) still follow you with such a gracious proposal as this is, that I now make unto you;

is it not a Miracle of mercy, a prodigy of kindness?

Quest. 10. And now what will you do? Will you still for all this go on in your contempt of God? Will you still refuse to know him, and never mind acquaintance with him? Will you still be indifferent whether you have God for your Friend, or your Enemy? Now you have been tendred such a match, will you make another choice, will you bestow your heart somewhere else? and when you have done that, dare you stand to your choice, and say, that you have done very wisely in refusing God, and in embracing this present World? Will you maintain it at the day of judgment, that you have done well to refuse acquaintance with himself, and to run the hazard of his displeasure? But you will not, you say, trouble your head with such melancholy fancies as these are: they are enough to put a man besides his Wits; you hope to do as well as others, and so long you care not. Well then, it seems you are resolved; though, let me tell you, if you are contented to fare as most shall fare at last, you must be content to be damned; for the Scripture is exceeding clear in this, that the number of those that go to Heaven, is a very small number; and if you will not take my word for it, (for indeed I would not that you should take my word, nor any mans breathing without warrant from Gods word, in things of so high a nature) look into the Scripture, and at your leisure, ponder a while upon these following Texts, *Luke, 13. 23. 24. Then said one unto him, Lord are there few that shall be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for*
many

many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, Mat. 20. 16. Many are called, but few are chosen. And Luke 12. 32. Christ saith, his flock is a little flock. And the Church complains of the fewness of her number in this Language. Mic. 7 1. Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits. I might heap up abundance of Scriptures, of the same nature, all which speak this to us ; that it is not so common a thing to go to Heaven as most people reckon upon. But yet if thou be resolved, come what will come, not to change your mind ; if after so many warnings and pleadings, you still continue of this judgement ; I must speak a dreadful Word : Your blood be upon your own Soul. I have blown the Trumpet, I have done what in me lies to convince thee of thy dangerous state, while thou art a stranger to God, and to bring thee to a speedy acquaintance with him ; but thou hast after many and many a tender, given in this answer, that as for God thou dost not desire to be acquainted with him ; as for your matching with his Son, it's that which thou carest not for hearing of, except thou mightest have his estate without his Sovereignty ; thou wilt not have him for thy Husband, except he will let thee do as thou list, and run a whoring from him when thou pleasest ; Thou wilt not have Heaven, except thou mayst have it without Holyness ; and as for the invitations of God, thou still makest light of them, neither promises nor threatnings signify much with you. Well then, when you find by Woful experience what you have done, know whom you must lay all the blame on. I call Heaven and Earth to record, and you your selves are witnesses

nesses, that I have with all the pity and earnestness that I could for my soul, told you of these great things : but you think the flattering offers that the Devil makes, to be more advantagious then those which God makes, and his service to be preferred before the service of Christ, and the Friendship of the world to be esteemed before the Friendship of God, and the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, you value before those rivers of pleasures which are at the right hand of God for evermore. Now, if you continue in this mind, blame not me if you miscarry for ever ; you must whether you will or no stand to your choice. Do not say but you were told of these things ; this is not the first time by many, but it may be the last that you may ever hear for ought that I know. Remember you were once well offered. Do you think that God will always bare with such unworthy abuses ? shall Gods Justice never be righted ? Yes, yes, be not deceived, slighted kindnesses will cost dear at last. What have you yet to say for your self ? Do you think that I mean you any hurt by all this ? except you count Salvation a wrong, and kindness it self an injury. But if all this will not do, go then and make the best thou canst of all thy Friends ; let us see how well, and how long they will entertain thee : ere a few days, it may be, shall be at an end, we shall hear how you like your choice : when they shall turn you out of doors, and tell you plainly, they can do nothing for you, you must shift as well as you can ; as for them, they can't provide for themselves, much less for you. And then let's see who hath made the best choice, he that is acquainted with God, and chosen him for

for his Friend, or he that hath taken the World for his Friend? Let's see who will do most for their Friends, when a time of trial comes. When Heaven and Earth are all in a Flame, when the Trumpet is sounding, when the Judge and his Attendants, Christ and all his Holy Angels, are coming, when the Prisons the Graves are opened, and the Prisoners are brought forth, then let's see who will have the chearfullest Countenance, he that holdeth up his hand at the bar, or they that sit upon the bench with the Judge: for know you not that the Saints, the Friends of the Judge, shall sit with him when he judgeth the World? We shall know when the storm riseth whose house was best, that which was built upon the sand, or that which was built upon the Rock. O that People were now of the same mind that they will be of at the day of Judgement! O that they would consider, that if they will not now be at leisure to think of these things, they shall be at leisure to repent of them hereafter. Do not talk of scorns, and reproaches, and suffering; what, do you think that Heaven will not make amends for all that? which is most to be feared, the scorns of God, or the scorns of men? Which will do you most hurt, mans contempt, or Gods? Where is the man that will be laugh't out of a great estate? Because a fool saith, that a Jewel is not worth the taking up, will you therefore never stoop to take it up? The truth of it is, if you intend to make any thing of your Profession, you must be willing to be counted a fool, and a mad man: but you must remember, it is by those that are so themselves. O be not affrighted from your duty by the talk of the rabble. If the thing

thing be evil, let the vice of it scare you ; but if
 it be good, let not the fear of them which are very
 incompetent judges in such a case divert you
 from it. Do you think that such poor excuses
 will be taken at the day of Judgment ? What
 do you intend to say to God then ? Lord, I would
 have laboured to have known thee, I would have
 taken some care of my soul, and I would have
 taken some pains about the things of Eternity,
 But that I saw that almost every one that did
 with any seriousness look after such matters,
 were scorned and laughed at, &c. When I
 had got into the company of those that were
 Godly, and I had half a mind to go with them to
 Heaven, then my Friends fell a jeering of me, and
 ask'd me whether I meant to be mad, to undo
 my self, to turn Puritan and Phanatick ? Do you,
 I say, believe that such a Plea will stop the mouth
 of the Judge, and keep him from pronouncing
 the sentence against you ? Will this hold the hands
 of Justice ? Will the thoughts of this quench or
 cool the dreadfull flames. ? Be better advised,
 O be better advised for your souls sake, and con-
 sider how such creatures will befool themselves.
 Who would upon such a trifle part with Hea-
 ven ? That would be laughed out of Glory, and
 jeered into Hell ? Is your mind yet altered ? Have
 you any thought or resolutions to look after
 your soul and acquaintance with God ? Are
 there none of you all that ask by this time, what
 shall I do to be acquainted with God ? Are there
 none of you that begin to think that it is high
 time to look out for a Friend in a time of need ?
 have I all this while been beating the air, and la-
 boured in Vain ? shall I leave you all as I found
 you ?

you? God forbid. Methinks I hear some poor souls crying out by this time, O that I had but such a Friend that would bring me acquainted with God! O that I had but saving knowledge of Jesus Christ! O that I did but understand what it means to have Communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit! I see my self undone and lost for ever, except I have an interest in this Friend. O who will bring me to him? How shall I get acquainted with him? O that is a sweet Language! That's a very good question, *What shall I do to be saved?* but do you speak in sober sadness? do you speak in jest or in earnest? If any one would give you advice and direction, would you follow it in spite of all the opposition of Hell: What do you say, will you labour to keep exactly to those Directions that shall be given? if you will, I do not question but that you and God will be acquainted before you die. But, O let not me take a great deal of pains and all to little purpose, as to you; do not now serve me as the Jews did *Jeremiah*, come and ask Counsel of God, and take the Devils. But in hopes that some poor souls may in a good earnest desire Directions with an intent to follow them, I shall give them as follows.

I. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, labour to get a through sense of your great estrangement from him, and of the danger of such an estrangement. This is that which makes people so well contented with their condition, because they see no great evil nor danger in it. Men are ready to
think

think very well of their condition although they be enemies to God, and no Friends to Christ. Enemies to God! They scorn your words, though all this while they express the greatest contempt of him conceivable; though they regard neither his Commands, Threatnings, nor Promises, though they value the company of a drunkard, a whore, before the company of God; though they do all that they can against God, Love nothing that he loves; though they side with Gods greatest enemies, yet they abhor to be thought to be any others then well-wishers to Christ, and the Friends and Servants of God; that they never come near God, yet they take it very ill if they be not reckoned amongst his acquaintance, and special Friends. Where is the professor almost living, that doth not count it a high piece of uncharitableness, if one do not Canonize them among the Saints, though they live more like bruits! How hainously do they take it, if any one do but question their state? They ignorant of God! They enemies to the Cross of Christ! they blind! they unconverted! Who is that man which dare question their condition? They hope to fare as well as any precise Puritan of them all, they will hope to be saved; say what you will then, you shall never beat them out of their trust in God. And though in Faithfulness to their Souls, we beg of them to make a more diligent inquiry into the state of their Souls, because we know that the heart is so deceitful, and we have very great cause to suspect that they know not God; yet they will go on very cheerfully with this confidence, untill Christ himself shew them their mistake, and tell them plainly that he knows

knows them not, and that he never accounted them any of his Friends. But now did men but thoroughly understand their natural estrangement from God, were they but indeed sensible of the vileness of their hearts, did they but take notice of the Rebellions and Treasons that are within, the case would be far otherwise with them than it is. O this, this is the reason why so many millions of professors miscarry everlastingly, and never come to desire the Friendship of God, because they never believed that they were any otherwise than Friends, they do not suspect themselves at all, but think that they are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas the Lord knows, and Christians know too, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. But now, when men begin to be thoroughly sensible of this enmity that is in their natures against God; When they see what mutinies and rebellions there are in them against their most gracious Lord and King; and when they are made to understand the consequences of this War, then how sensibly do they cry out, what shall they do? was there ever any poor wretched creatures in worse condition than themselves? Was ever any ones heart worse than theirs? Are there any out of hell that are such Monsters of sin as they are? O what shall they do? They see the Fire kindled, and themselves hanging over everlasting burnings: now all the world for a Christ; they believe now that God and Man are not equals; that there is no contending with the Almighty: who can stand before his indignation? and when they see Gods Sword drawn, and the point of it set against their heart, when they behold the terrors of the
 Lord

Lord setting themselves in array against them, and themselves like to lose all, then how welcome would the news of a Parly be? How glad would they be then to hear of a Pardon? Then down go their weapons; they will sooner come before God with a Halter about their Necks, than a Sword by their sides; they will fight now with no other weapon but Tears and Prayers: As for their Armour, they break it in pieces, and lay it at the feet of their offended Prince; and O if they might but have any hopes of pardon, it would revive their hearts; if they might have but a look of kindness from God, it would be a greater comfort to them than all the whole World besides could afford them. To whom can a Skilful Physician be more welcome, than to the sick? Christ came to seek the lost, and such as these we are sent to incourage: But till the soul comes to this pass, a Christ is not valued at all by it: If sinners be not made thus to understand themselves, why though we should plead with never so much earnestness with them, we do but beat the Air; all that we can say signifies very little. The man thinks his great work is done, though his hands have been all this while in his bosome; he is far onwards in his Journey to Heaven, though he never set one Step out of his own doors; he hath an Interest in God, and is very well acquainted with him, and hath an assured confidence of his condition, that he shall be happy, though he have not one dram of grace. He is a good Churchman, he hath sat at the Lords Table, and the like: But O how many are there which shall see, and know that it is more than possible, to come off before God, and to complement him much,

and to sit oft at his table, and yet not to be any of his peculiar Friends, and special Acquaintance; now if ever you would make any thing of Religion, and be made highly to prize Gods favour, and to be really acquainted with him; you must labour to understand your distance from him, and the unconceivable hazzard that you run, while you are in a state of Separation from God; that there is but one step between you, and the state of the Damned; for what would become of you, if God should say to you, this night thy soul shall be required of you. How easily can God in a Moment stop your breath, and send your Soul and Body into that lake that burns for ever and ever? & is it not then time for you to look about you? O this ignorance of our selves, how doth it expose us? (*Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 26.*) He was not a whit mistaken who said, *That the not knowing of our selves, was one of the chiefest causes of our sin and misery, and that the consideration of the state of the Soul, and the through understanding it's depravedness, was the beginning of Wisdom; for it's weakness being well known, a man will not afterwards trust it in the determination of the greatest things; but man will be desirous to consult that great Oracle, the will of his Maker; and finding his old guide is blind, and hath oft missed him, thereupon he is the readier to be acquainted with such a one, who may direct him in the way to true happiness.* If you would therefore be acquainted with God, you must get well acquainted with your selves: you will upon the knowledge of your self be afraid of your self. He was none of the weakest men who said, *That a true sense of folly is no small sign of some proficiency in Wisdom.* Look into thy self, O man, search every corner

corner, behold what Abundance of Armour there is in such and such a dark Cellar; but is this Armour strong enough to encounter a God withall? Can'st thou with these Fig-leaves defend thy self against the arrows of the Almighty? Behold what a condition thou art in, if thou stirrest a step further. Yield speedily, and throw down thine Arms, or you are a dead man. Do you know this? Do you really believe this? Is it possible? What, believe that your Treason is found out, and that you are within a little of Execution, and yet not tremble, and yet not seek nor desire a pardon. When a man thoroughly understands how things stand between him and God, and how unable he is to carry on a War against him, he will speedily cast about, how he may conclude a Peace upon any terms. As soon as *Benhadad* knew what a condition his Army was in, when he saw the Crowns of his thirty Kings shaken, and his Warlike Captains cut in pieces, or to tremble, & be like women, when instead of a mighty Army of gallant Warriors in martial order, behaving themselves bravely in the field, he saw their Carcases upon heaps, their garments rolled in blood, the Shields of his mighty Ones cast away, and himself wofully deserted, how speedily doth he send away his Servants, with Ropes about their Necks, to beg Peace upon any Terms? When the *Gibeonites* heard what dangerous fighting it was against *Joshuah*, they were not long before they made means to make a Covenant with him. So the Soul, when it doth seriously consider what a sad condition it is in, while it continues in Rebellion against God, it's impossibility to stand it out long, and utter inability to conquer him: When it perceives the de-

signs of Satan, who first caused this difference between the Soul and God, and hath still instigated and stirred it up to persecute with all the violence that might be; I say, when the Soul sees this before it is quite too late! O how doth it bewail it's condition, how doth it cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me! O what will become of me, if I make War still against God? And as for flying, whether shall I fly from his presence, and where shall I hide myself out of his sight? And how shall I look him in the face, whom I have thus desperately and ungratefully opposed? can such a Traytor as I possibly expect any mercy; if the Lord should look upon me, and not immediately cast me into Hell, it would be a miracle of patience. And thus the man that begins a little to understand himself, speaks to himself; and after that, he with *Ephraim*, smites upon his thigh, and bemoans his condition exceedingly! O that he should ever take up Arms against his Gracious Prince! O what shall become of him? Well, I have heard that the God of Heaven is a merciful King, I will go and cast my self at his feet, if I perish I perish. If I continue in this rebellion, there is no hopes; If I fly there is no escaping; and if I yield, I can but perish! O sad, sad is my condition, Woe and alas, what shall I do in these dreadful perplexities? But, why do I stay here? The Avenger of Blood follows after me apace; well, I will go to my God, through Christ, and I have heard that this is the only way, and that there is not the least hope in the World, any other way to get a pardon, to escape the Wrath to come. O that the precious and merciful Jesus would pitty me,

and

and stand my Friend now if ever ! O that he would speak a good word for me. *Have mercy upon me, Jesus thou Son of David have mercy upon me !* O make peace for me, by thy blood ; if thou wilt, thou canst do more with a word speaking, than all the Saints and Angels in the World ; if ever any poor Creature in the world had need of mercy, then have I. O mercy, mercy, mercy for thy bloods sake ! But because I shall speak to this under another Direction, I shall be the briefer. Now when a man is at this pass, he is in a fair way for peace ; but now as long as a man is ignorant of all this, he is quite in another Note, he will never buckle, and therefore he shall be broken. Therefore consider well your condition, observe the actings of your own Soul, if you be one of the Friends and Acquaintance of *God*, what means your breaking and hating of his Spiritual Laws ? What's the reason, if you love *God*, that you can take no delight at all in his company, no pleasure in his Sabbaths ? If you are a Friend of *God*, how hap you to come no oftner to his house, when he dwells so near you ? Why do you knock no oftner at his door ? Why are you so rare in your visits ? Is this your kindness ? Is this like a Friend ? How comes it to pass that there are so many Arms found hid in your house ? What are they all for ? What is the meaning of all those Meetings that you give to *Gods* Enemies ? What do all those Whisperings, Plots, and Projects signify ? Is this friendship ? Can you mean any good by all this ? What do you say of your condition ? Do you ever complain, and that feelingly of your enmity against *God* ? Did you ever observe what a desperate wicked spirit you

have against your Maker; and were you ever made sensible of the danger of such a state, and ashamed and grieved to the very soul that you should ever engage against so good a God? Why then I am confident you can't but cry out with all the strength and earnestness of your soul for a peace, you can't but desire to meet with your adversary quickly, while he is in the way. But if you see nothing at all of the Treachery and Baseness that is in your heart, search, and search again, it's your Ignorance, and Blindness, and not the goodness of your state, that makes you to know nothing by your self. What, are you better than *David*? He was so jealous of his own heart, that he dared not to trust to his own Examination of it, but he desires the great Heart-searcher to help him in his work. Are you more excellent than *Paul* after his Conversion? Had he more reason to complain of himself than you have? O be at leisure to look within, and get *David's* Candle and Lanthorn to go into those dark corners of your soul with it, and it may be you may see that within which may make your heart to ache, and your joynts to quiver, and your spirits to faint within you. *Paul* was sometime as confident as you, he took no notice of the Enmity that was within against God, though he was as full of it as an Asp is of Poyson; yet before he came acquainted with God, the case was altered with him, he was of another mind when that light shined about him, and he cried out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* He now thinks it is *hard kicking against the Pricks*, dangerous opposing of God, and persecuting of Christ in any of his Members; and he desires nothing in the world

World so much as to be reconciled to God, and to have him for his Friend, whom before he fought against as an Enemy.

II. DIRECTION.

My next *Direction* to those which would be acquainted with God, shall be this : Get an humble heart, which is the consequent of the former. God will exalt none to this high honour of being his Friends, but such as have Low Thoughts of themselves. The humble are the persons that he will raise, these are they that he will converse most with, these are the great Favourites of Heaven which God doth delight to honour, *Psal. 34. 18. The Lord is nigh to them which are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* God is nigh to them, (with Reverence be it spoken) God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he can't endure to have them far from him, he must have them always nigh to him, always under his eyes ; as for these broken ones, he will to be sure not leave them long, not go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds, to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the Cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future Aches. He is a foolish cruel Chirurgeon, who for fear of putting his Patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently : and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he make a through Cure of it. Thus God doth by his Patients sometimes, when the nature of their Distemper calls for it,

But however, he will be sure not to be out of the way when they want him most. It's possible they may look upon themselves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Physician when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an Enemy, they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened, and their distemper is pretty well worn off, they will with shame and thankfulness acknowledge their Error; nay, they do from their Souls confess that they do not deserve the least look of Kindness from God, but to be counted strangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himself; that is, like a God of Love, Mercy, and Goodness; and that they are the persons that he hath set his heart upon; he will have them in his Bosome, never leave them nor forsake them; and though these contrite ones many times look upon themselves as lost, yet God will save them, and they shall sing a Song of thankfulness amongst his delivered ones. Again, the Sacrifices of God are a broken heart: *A broken and a contrite Spirit, O God thou wilt not despise. Psal. 51. 17.* The Proud sinner he may bring his stalled Oxen, multitudes of Rams and Sheep, and his Rivers of Oyl, and yet all this while not be accepted. There is another kind of Sacrifice that would be ten thousand times more acceptable to God. We read that Sacrifices have been despised, Prayers, long Prayers have been rejected; Sabbaths, New-Moons, and Solemn Assemblies the Lord hath sometimes abhorred; but we never read that he despised the Sacrifice of an humble heart, the Prayers of such always have an answer one way or other; their poor performances,

mances, their Chatterings, and Mournings, are sweet melody, and powerful Rhetorick in Gods ear. Who are the men that have most of Gods company? Who are they which he doth most frequently visit? Are they not such as look upon themselves as the chiefest of sinners? These are they which are wrapped up into the third Heaven. None have so much of Heaven upon Earth as those that wonder that the Earth doth not swallow them up, and that they are not in Hell. But, O saith the humble Soul, God is the high and mighty God, and infinite in his Holiness and Justice; how then can such a Creature as I ever expect that he should so much as cast his eye upon me? Yes, sweet soul, such is the infinite condescension and goodness of God, that he will sooner look upon thee than another. And if you can't credit my words, hear what he speaks himself, *Isa. 7. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of my contrite ones.* The thoughts of Gods Majesty, Eternity, and Holiness may, and with good reason too, awe that Soul that hath low thoughts of it self. Every sinner hath cause enough to cry out with astonishment, Will God look upon such a vile sinful wretch as I am? Will he that is infinite in holiness take any notice of me, except, to shew his displeasure against me? What shall I do? sure such a creature as I can't without a Miracle have a smile from God, God may indeed look upon me in his Wrath, and vex me in his sore Displeasure. God may justly look me into Hell; but that he

should look upon me in kindness, or take any special notice of me in love, that would be a Wonder indeed. What, God dwell with me ! Yes, with thee, if thou hast but high thoughts of him, and low thoughts of thy self ; the meaner thou thinkest of thy self, the greater worth he sees in thee. God will not only look upon thee, nor will he only Knock at thy door, and call at your house, or give you a transitory visit, but he will come and dwell with thee. Now dwelling speaks a continued abode with one, and thus God will continue with the humble ; never remove from them, for any considerable time, till eternity hath an end, till himself, and the Soul cease to be, which will be never. God will not be a stranger to humble Souls, but he will come to them, and bring that along with him that shall make him, and them welcome too. God never comes to his friends, but he brings good cheer along with him. When the Soul gives God the best entertainment, it is all at his cost, his bread, his fatlings, his wine, his oyl, his cordials, his rich dainties. Where God comes, he will keep a noble house, and there shall be mirth and rich cheer good store, *Isa. 66. 1, 2. Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and Earth is my foot-stool : Where is that house ye will build me ? And where is the place of my rest ? For all these things hath my hand made, and all these things hath been, saith the Lord ; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* God seems to have low thoughts of Heaven it self in comparison of an humble soul : This is the Pallace, where this great King will keep his Court, this is the place of his rest. God is not so much de-
lighted

lighted and pleased in any of his brave Seats, as in this of an Humble Heart; here he dwelleth most commonly; this was a great purchase of his own Son; this was the Master-piece of his Power and Goodness; this was the project of infinite Wisdom and counsel. *What shall I do to be saved?* Is a Language that makes Hell in a rage, and Heaven to rejoyce. God is never so well pleased as when he beholds the beauty of his own Grace shining in a poor lost self-debasing Creature. The Spouse is adorned with Humility, when Christ gives her that visit, *Cant. 1. 4.* God hath far more kindness for one that lies under a Sense of his own Vileness, that thinks himself unworthy to tread upon Gods Earth, or to breathe in his Air, than for the most confident righteous Pharisee in the World. Such an humble Soul will be much in admiring of God, and will set a high price upon his kindness; a look, a smile, a visit! O how welcome are they to those poor trembling Ones! Wherefore God doth with frequency and love visit them; he knows that he can never be welcome to such, they will count it the highest honour, that the most high should come into them in their low Condition. Wherefore if you desire to have any intimate acquaintance with God, labour to be more and more sensible of your own unworthiness, study your heart and nature well, and be more curious in the observance of the baseness and treachery of your own Soul; endeavour to have as mean thoughts of your self as *Paul* had, who did not stick to call himself the chiefest of sinners. Humble your selves before the Lord, and he will exalt you; he that is little in his own eye, is great in Gods,

God. When was it that *Jacob* met with God, but when he had been humbling of himself? As you may read at your leisure, *Gen.* 23. There is many a professor that holds out many a year in a course of external performances, and yet never knows what it is to have any intimate acquaintance or converse with God: whereas I am persuaded, if the business were thoroughly examined, it would be found that they were never made deeply sensible of their undone state out of Christ, never understood the desperate depravedness of their hearts, and nature; that they never lay under any lively sense of their separation from, and enmity against God, and they were never brought off from their own righteousness, and saw themselves poor, beggarly, starved Creatures; and in this condition came to buy Wine and Milk without mony, and without price. But this humility, it is an excellent Grace, it makes the soul fit for the richest enjoyments of God, and to do God the greatest service. Were it possible that God should converse much with a proud man, he would make a strange use of it, he would steal God's Crown, and put it upon his own head; but God would not endure proud Angels near him, and can it be expected that he should take proud men in their places? The more any one grows in Grace, and acquaintance with God, the more he sees of his own unworthiness, the more he admires Free Grace. Why, me Lord! why me! will be the Language of those which converse with God: And while they are thus admiring God, and laying themselves low, he comes again with his soul-ravishing kindneses; and thus by humility they are more acquainted with God, and

and being more acquainted with God, they are made more humble, and the one increaseth the other. Thus the humble soul is raised higher and higher, till he come to an eternal possession of God in the highest Heavens. When an humble Saint lives as it were in Heaven upon Earth, he scarce thinks himself worthy to live upon the Earth. When any one speaks well of him, and admireth the grace of God in him, he looks upon himself as an unprofitable Servant, and he durst not assume the least glory to himself; not unto me, not unto me, but unto the Lord be the praise given. Who am I a poor wretch? O did you but know what a heart I have, did you but see the workings of my thoughts, could you but tell how things are, indeed you would rather admire at Gods patience, then mans excellency. This he speaks, not that he is worse than others, but because he hath a more spiritual sence of his state than others have: Neither doth he speak thus in proud Policy, thinking to make others to have a better esteem of him for his humility, but he doth really feel the pressure of that filthiness of sin, which makes him thus to groan out these complaints. The reason why God doth converse most with the humble, is because they will be most thankful, and most fruitful, and make the Wisest improvement of his favours. Wherefore, if you value the comfort of a spiritual life, if you desire communion with God, if you would have a Heaven upon Earth, endeavour to get an humble heart: To walk humbly, and to walk with God, go together.

III. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must visit him often, be much at his house, Knock at his door many times in a day, and resolve to continue Knocking till he open; and if he do not come presently, wait for him; you would do as much for your Prince, and it may be to a meaner person. We can't expect to be acquainted with them that we will not come near. It is to no purpose for that man to speak of acquaintance with God, who never speaks to him, comes at him, or enquires after him. Neither will a slight visit or two in a Transitory complemental manner serve the turn; a man may do this, and yet not be said to be acquainted with God. A stranger may come once to your house that was never there before, and never intends to come again; and I believe you will scarce write such a one down among your special Friends and intimate acquaintance. So in Spirituals; for acquaintance and converse with God are no such slight things as the World commonly takes them to be. If you would make any thing of this great work of Getting acquaintance with God, you must not jest in it, yet must give God many solemn and set Visits, and carry your self with all the observance and respect to him that you can for your soul. This is that which keeps many thousands of Strangers from the life of Grace and intimate acquaintance with God, because they know not what those more-peculiar visits of God mean; they understand not what it is to draw nigh to God in secret; they come not to him with those more spiritual Acts of Religion; they pray

pray, it may be, in their Families, and it may be that but seldom (but by the way, never let such pretend to the Knowledge of God, who call not upon him in their Families) but what they do, it is but in a poor formal perfunctory manner between sleep and awake ; and will you call this acquaintance with God ? Will you call this an act of Adoration and Spiritual Worship ? Is it to bow down a while before God, and to read or speak a few words, and there's an end ? Their work is over, their task is done, and they are glad of it. But now, such as these do not come into Gods Chambers ; they come to his House, as I may so say, but they regard not whether he be at home, whether they speak to God, and have an answer from God or no : They call indeed, but desire not much to be heard ; they Knock but are not very careful to stay till the door be opened. But alas, alas, such as these can't tell what it is to enjoy communion with God. They have got, it may be, into some course of external performances, by reason of the Example of their Superiours, Education, or by being under the sound of the Gospel, and from some force that natural conscience doth put upon them, which will not be content except something be done. But such as these may not be said to visit God in that manner that I would persuade them to, which would be acquainted with God ; for all this they stand a great way off from God, and may be termed strangers and forreigners. How seldom are they upon their knees in secret ? How rare a thing is it for them with *Isaac*, to go into the field to meditate ? They visit their Farms, they visit their Flocks, they visit their Swine, they go often to
visit

visit their sottish drunken Companions, whilest God and Christ, their Bible, their Closet, their Hearts are forgotten, and seldom or never visited. And is this true kindness to ones self? Is it any Wisdom to slight such a Friend as God would be to us, and to make so much of such sorry Companions? O stupid and dull souls! O what do we mean so strangely to forget our selves! For who is like to get by it, God or we, when we come and feed at his Table, and spend upon his cost? O little do people think what they might enjoy, would they purposely set themselves to meet with God, and go to his house with a strong resolution, not to come away from him till they have seen him, or heard from him. Now the great duties in which the soul may be said to visit God in, and in which God doth many times give out much of himself to the Soul, are these:

1. Solemn Meditation.
2. Secret Prayer.
3. Fasting.
4. Community of Experiences, and Communion with the Saints.

5. The Lords Supper.

1. *Meditation*, When the soul doth fix it self upon the Thoughts of some Spiritual and Divine object, such as the love of God in Christ, the glory of another world, &c. This is, as it were, going out to meet the Lord, and to take a walk with our Beloved; this is the getting up to Mount *Pisgah*, to take a survey of that goodly Land. When the soul doth as it were, bath it self in the Contemplation of Christs beauty, and labours to enamour it self more and more with his love; and to throw it self, as I may so say, into that

that Ocean of Divine goodness ; it will scarce leave till it be wound up to the highest pitch of admiration, of that infinite boundless love which should do such glorious things for so vile and contemptible, for so rebellious and unthankful a wretch as that is. O what manner of love is this! O that I were sick of love ! O that I might dye sick of love ! O that I were once in the embraces of my dearest Lord and Husband ! O that I could do nothing else day and night, but praise, love, and admire this infinite boundless love ? And did Christ indeed offer up his life for my sin ? Did he not think his precious heart-blood too dear for me ? And shall I think my heart-love too dear for him ? What, for me Lord, which am the chiefest of sinners ? Here, here's kindness with a witness. Stand still, O my soul, and admire, stand looking upon this lovely sight till thou art all on fire. These are pure flames, here thou needest not to fear to exceed ; widen thy soul, let thy affections run without controule. More fire, still, blow hard, it doth yet but smoke : O for some coals from the altar ! O for more fire, more fuel ! O that my heart were vehemently inflamed in the strongest love to him, who still deserves a thousand times more ! Help me all ye Angels, to blefs and adore his marvellous loving kindness. Christ is a Friend to Publicans and Sinners ; indeed, or such a one as I had never been on this side of Hell. O love, love, love ! What shall I render unto the Lord ? O that men would blefs the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ! O what meanest thou, O my soul, that thou art yet so cold ? Awake, awake Flattery and Flarp. I my self will awake

awake and praise, admire and love thee, O my
 God, whose love to my Soul is beyond expressi-
 on. And thus while the Soul is musing, the Fire
 begins to burn; while the Spouse is thinking of
 her glorious Husband, he knocks at the door, she
 draws the Latch, and he comes in smelling of
 Mirrhe, Aloes, and Cassia; he comes and kisses
 the Soul with the kisses of his lips, his Love is bet-
 ter than wine; he comes and takes the Soul into
 his arms. O the sweet pleasure of Divine Love,
 infinitely transcending all carnall Affections? O
 The joy that is at this meeting, far surpassing hu-
 mane apprehension! O the sweet entertainment
 that God and the Soul gives each other at such a
 time! I appeal to the experience of those that
 have been much exercised in this great Duty of
Meditation, if they have been in good earnest in
 the work, I am confident they can say something
 to this point. What sayst thou, O Christian,
 which art used to imitate *Isaac*? Didst thou never
 meet with anothergeſs Companion than *Re-
 beccah*? As he met with a Wife, so thou hast
 met with thy Husbond? When thou hast been
 in the Field, or Cloſet, at this work, hath not
 Christ then taken you by the hand, and led you
 into his Garden, and made you to tast of his
 pleasant Fruits? Hath he not brought you into
 his Banquetting-house, and brought out some
 of his choicest dainties? Are not those Flaggons
 more full of Spirit, more Cordial, and refreshing
 than Wine? O little do any but those who have
 tried it, think what a life they might lead, if they
 would with seriousness engage in this duty! Speak
 O ye gracious ones, that make conscience of this
 Soul-ravishing duty; speak I beseech you, and
 do

do not smother the kindnesses of God to you; speak, and let him have the praise: It may be by your venturing your Experience, hundreds may be encouraged to set upon the same work, and hundreds may also have the same experiences. What do you say? Have you not found the benefit of this duty? Did you never find Meditation a sweet Work? Was it worth your while or no to sequester your selves a while from the World to talk with your Beloved? Did you ever repent you of your Labour, and think your time lost? And have you not been able to say, that at such and such a time, when you were in the Mount, that it was good being there? Could you not have been almost content to have left the dearest Relations, and to have quitted your Interest in all Creature-comforts, so you might have had fuller enjoyments of God? Could you not have been contented to pass from Contemplation to Vision and Fruition? Why, speak then for the Lords sake, and for the sake of precious Souls, and keep not such a thing as this is in; let your unexperienced Neighbours know what a Soul-ravishing, and Soul-raising Duty Meditation is. Let me ask thee which readest these Lines, did you ever try what there was in this Duty of Meditation? I Suppose, if you converse much with such Books as speak of Communion with God, you can't but desire something of it, and I am perswaded you have sometimes wept since you began to read this Book, to think how little you experience; I believe you would be glad with all your Soul, to know what it is to be acquainted with God, and to have such a Friend as I have been speaking of. Why let me ask you again, did you ever try

what Meditation is! (You may read much of the
 extolment of this Duty; and directions about it
 in *the Bakers Saints Everlasting Rest*) did you
 ever get out of the world, and intensely fix your
 heart and thoughts upon any of the glorious At-
 tributes of God? Did you ever set before your
 eyes his love in Christ? If not, O try and fall to
 this work seriously and speedily; and you shall
 soon find the sweetness of it; you shall soon say
 that you lost many a good meeting, many a dain-
 ty bit for want of going for it. A carnal worldly
 heart must confess may possibly spoil this Duty,
 as all others, and grow formal in it, and be weary
 of it, and cast it off (though let me put in this,
 believe its marvellous rare for a Hypocrite to
 have any thing to do in such a secret duty as this
 is) but if they were true to the interest of their
 own Souls in the management of this work, I am
 confident they would be every day more and
 more in love with this duty: For I am perswa-
 ded that when the Soul is in good earnest, nay, I
 can speak it positively, there is no duty doth so
 much raise and warm the Soul; there is no duty
 wherein the people of God enjoy his sweet com-
 pany more than in this. This opens the treasures
 of Gods kindness; this takes his Love-tokens
 and presents them to the view of the Soul: this
 unlocks the Cabinets, and fetches out those pre-
 cious Jewels; by this the Soul doth, as it were
 talk with its Beloved; and in this Christ doth
 as it were take the soul by the hand, and lead it
 into his Palace, and shews it all those glorious
 things, which it shall shortly have in her posses-
 sion forever. And how can this choice but en-
 gage the Soul to express its gratitude to the
 height

height in answer to such love; and when the soul is in this frame, Christ will not be behind-hand with her, no love shall be lost between them. If the Spouse walk out to look for her Beloved, she shall find him before she hath done.

2. Another duty by which the Soul doth Visit God in a special manner, is *Secret Prayer*; by this the Soul knocks, and God is quick of hearing, and none of his Friends shall wait without doors so long as to Catch-cold. By this the Soul doth as it were storm Heaven, by this it gets into the Presence Chamber, and presents its requests. In this duty a Christian doth as it were turn the Key of Heavens Doors, and by this he unlocks the door of his own Soul; and so there is free access on both sides, the Soul Visits God, and God Visits the Soul, and this creates an intimacy. The poor wounded Creature opens his wounds, and then the great Physician comes with the Balm of Gilead. When Jacob is thus weeping and praying alone, he meets with God, he meets a blessing, he wrestles, he conquers. This duty of *Secret Prayer*, and that other of *Meditation*, are two sating duties, by which the Souls of Believers come to Gods Table, and eat, and drink of strengthening food; and for want of these, many poor Souls are thin. O why do Christians, why do Professors maintain no fairer Correspondency with God in such duties wherein he doth manifest himself more than ordinarily to the Soul? The reason of this may be because God accounts himself more highly honoured, and more truly loved by them which are much in these, than by others. By this a man doth as it were honour the goodness of God, in that it shews it worth the while to steal

out of the world, and to leave the best Company on Earth to go to God: He honours the Truth of God, by being earnest for what God hath promised though it be unseen; he honours the Omnipiscency of God, by contenting himself with his Eye and his Ear alone; he sanctifies his Omnipresence, by believing that his God can hear him, and be with him in what corner soever he creeps in to. I might be large in speaking of the excellencies of this duty, but I refer it rather to another place. But I would not be mistaken in what I have delivered, as if I would by this exclude Family Prayer, no, far be it from me; for God in these doth many times exceedingly refresh his. But because a man can't possibly judge so well of himself by publick Prayer, as he can by secret: And hypocrisie and pride, do not usually so much attend secret duty as more publick. It's possible in more publick duty, that a man may be much raised, and be very warm, and high in his expressions, and almost Ravish the hearts of his Hearers, whereas he may be all that while acted only by a proud heart, and for ought I know, the Devil himself may help a man thus to pray sometimes. This I am confident of, he is not afraid of such prayers as these which tend so much to the hardening of a Sinner, and makes him believe that his heart is warmed with Communion with God, whenas it is possible it is nothing but a secret self-pleasing, that those that joyned with him, might think very highly of him, as one that was passing Spiritual in his performances. O the heart of man is deep, and desperately full of Deceit! But now there is none of this Temptation in secret Closet Prayer, and there a Soul may be more particular in its Complaints

plaints and petitions, more earnest in pleading with God, and may use such Expostulations, Postures, and Gestures, such Intermittions, and Groanings, such pauses as would be very unfit for more publick Duty. Wherefore I lay somewhat the more stress upon this Duty of *Secret Prayer*. But this I say again, where one of them is practised conscientiously, the other will not be neglected. I might add the Practice and Experience of Gods Children to inforce this Duty. *David* would never have been at it so oft at midnight, if he had got nothing at all by it. *Peter* would scarce have forgot to eat, when he was an hungry, except he had met with a bit in a Corner to stay his Stomach.

3. *Fasting*, especially private *Fasting*, is another Duty, wherein God meets the Soul, and the Soul visits God. This is as it were Execution-day, the day when the Soul brings out all the Enemies of God to be Crucified; this is the day wherein the Idols are searched for, brought out, and buried, or ground to Powder, and these are things which God will come to see with much delight. By this the Soul is as it were adorned, her Deformities done away, and she is trimmed up to meet her Beloved. When a Saint fasts from sin, and abstains from sensual Pleasures, then it is many times feasted by God, and refreshed with Spiritual enjoyments.

4. Another season wherein God meets the Soul, and the soul is visited by God is, when Christians are met together to communicate experiences, or to discourse together about the great things of God. What though most of the world are ashamed to own Religion when it is out of fashion?

union? What though but few dare meet together to speak of Gods goodness, and to Praise him, and call upon his Name? Why, Christ says, Though there be but two or three of them, he will make the number one the more, *He will be in the midst of them*: And though they dare but whisper, it may be, and their meetings to observe God, and do good to one another, may be prohibited by the Publick Magistrate, and consequently what they do in this kind, must be done in a great deal of hazard, yet the People of God stand not long disputing, they know what to do in this case; yet they should be wise in it too; Not to dare the Magistrate, and to do what they do to confront Authority, but in the uprightness of their Souls they desire to meet together to Worship God according to his own Will. Yet for all this, though they manage their business with never so much secrecy, God will take notice of them, he hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written for them that call oft upon his Name, and God will make them up among his Jewels. But I shall have occasion to speak of something to this purpose afterwards, and therefore I pass it over the more briefly.

Another time wherein the Lord is pleased to discover much intimacy, and endeared affection to his people, is in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. This is the great Passover, and it can't be unwellcomer News to the poor *Israelites*, to hear of Redemption from Wars, then Egyptian Bondage, instead of being burdened with barbarous Task-masters, to be made free, Rich, and Honourable, and to see the strength of the Enemy laid in the Dust. It is not for nothing that

that this Passover is to be had in everlasting Remembrance. If I should Appeal to the people of God that have kept this solemn Feast, and ask them how their hearts were affected, do they not all bow their Heads and Hearts, and adore that Goodness that should Save, Feed, and Feast them, and Punish, Kill, and Damn others? Are there not thousands that can tell you, that Christs Flesh is Bread indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed? no Provision so great, no Banquet so Sweet, so Noble: No Entertainment comparable to that which the Princely Jesus giveth to his Spouse in that Ordinance: The King brings her into the Banqueting-House, and his Banner over her is Love; she is then made to understand, that the Kisses of His Lips do breath Life, and that His Visits at such a time, usually leave behind them more special Testimonies of the largeness of his Heart, the loveliness of his Nature, and of his matchless Excellency. Speak Christian, what dost thou say to this? Canst thou not subscribe to this? Art thou not able to say, that then thou hast tasted and seen, could thou not then go out and invite all the poor starved hungry Souls in the World, to come and See, and Taste? Art thou not able to say, come, and I will tell you what Christ hath done for my Soul? Let me ask that Saint that hath been Feasted many a time, and oft, what he thought of his Entertainment: Werenot you made welcome? Was not the joy of the Lord your strength? Was not the Provision that the world entertains her Friends with, but mean, course, unsavory, compared with it? Which was best, the Husk; or the Bread, and Fatted Calf, the Garlick and Onions, or the Manna.

Manna, the Milk and Honey? 'Tis not without cause that the Faces of some do shine, their looks speak their Face none of the meanest, and their Activity is not a disparagement to their Keeper; inquire further, and you shall be informed if their experience be not too big for to be cloathed in words. How oft have some of Christs Favourites, after they have Dined with their Lord, been led forth into the Garden to Walk; and Oh the delightful Shades that they have sat under! At another time, Christ, not Satan, hath carried them as it were in his Arms, and Bosome, and set them upon the Pinnacle of the Temple, not to make them giddy, and hazard their Fall, but to let them understand how much he hath preferred them before others, and as long as they are upon that great Corner-Stone, no Storms can shake; in Christs Arms no fear of falling: At another time, the Soul hath been carried into the Mount of God, and there it hath seen Christ Transfigured, and beheld so much Brightness, Glory, and Majesty in him, that hath reflected a Glory, upon it self, and even Transfigured the Soul, that its scarce like it self, and there it could say, its good being here: and then Christ hath bid the Soul lift up its Eyes and look up to the Heavens, look round from one side to the other, and look beyond the visible Heavens by Faith, to the Seat of the blessed; Well, all this is thine, to thee will I give it, I purchased it, I have paid for it, and 'tis thine, and live like one that is worth more than a world; live up to your Estate, expect that shortly I should set you in the Possession of all: And as for the World look down upon that, if it be worth the accepting, so much

much of it as is good for thee thou shalt have also. O did weak Christians but know what Strength, Joy, and Comfort this Ordinance doth afford, I believe they would not be so hardly perswaded to come when they are invited. Did they but understand how sweet, how wholsome, how dainty the Dishes are which Wisdom prepares; could they but conceive what satisfaction and fulness there is for the empty; what joy, and Solace for the Mourning, and Disconsolate; what strength and quickning for the Weak, I am ready to think that they would scarce be so long absent from the Lords Table. But think not that every one that sits down is made so welcome, nor that Christ gives his Dainties to strangers or enemies; many may come and Receive, and not only Feed upon a piece of Bread, and Drink two or three Spoonfuls of Wine; and really if this were all the Provision that a Saint were to have, it were scarce worth so solemn an Invitation: It's possible to come thither to eat and drink your own Damnation, and in stead of an affectionate Treatment to be disappointed with a Friend, how comest thou hither, not having on the Wedding Garment. Yet the sensible Hungry burthened Souls, notwithstanding all their fears may come, nay they must, and its little less than giving Assents to Satans calumnies which he raiseth against Christ and his ways to forbear; 'tis too ungratefull a Contempt of one of the excellent Cordials which the great Physitian hath Provided for the recovering and strengthening of his poor swooning Patients; and in a word, its too like a foolish being fond of our Sin and Sorrow, when we refuse the comfortable

fortable Appointment; which the Goodness
 and Wisdom of a Father, the Love, and Ten-
 derness of a Husband, and the Sweetness of the
 Holy Spirit, doth so freely offer, Persuade, and
 Command: the Spirit, saith Come, and the Bride-
 groom saith Come, and why should not he that
 is athirst come thankfully, humbly, speedily.
 Well now, poor weary Soul, what hast thou to
 say against the Excellency of Rest? Poor sick
 Soul, what Fault canst thou find with Ease,
 Health, and Strength? Poor guilty Soul, that
 looks upon thy self as next to condemned.
 What harm would a Pardon, and the public Seal-
 ling of it do thee? Who would think that man
 hungry, that had rather eat Ashes than Bread.
 Who would judge that Person thirsty, that had
 rather drink Gall, Tears, and Wormwood, than
 the clear refreshing Streams, that come from
 that Rock, the Lord Christ? Will you never
 believe that Christ invites you, look into the
 Note that he hath sent out his Servants with,
 whose Name do I Reade there? who are the per-
 sons that are Invited? Of what Rank and Qua-
 lity? Are they the Great Ones of the World?
 Are they the Learned? Are they the Proud, and
 Self-Conceited Pharisees? Why, I find none of
 these in the Writing. Who are they then that
 may come with Confidence to draw water out of
 these Wells of Consolation? The Poor in Spirit,
 the Hungry, the Sick, the Wounded, the Lost;
 these are Pools of Bethesda, where the Angels of
 the Covenant do oft Descend, and Move the
 Waters, and where is it fittest for the Impotent
 to lie, than there where they cannot miss of a
 Doctor, a Visit, or Cure. What do you think of
 this

this poor Heart; are they but flourishes, do I speak, or doth Christ, and if he say it, who can dissuade it? Will he, can he be worse than his word; I knew he is usually better, but never short of his Promise; will you Credit the Experiences of Christians, have they not seen, have they not known, have they not felt; yea, have not all your Spiritual senses been exercised, and refreshed at that time when the King hath been at his Table? One is ready to say, if ever I could have left the World at a minutes warning, and have stept immediately into Eternity, it was then when mine eyes beheld the King in his beauty, when he held out his Golden Scepter unto me, and took me into his Imbraces. Yea, when the Ministers of Christ presented me with the Jewels and Bracelets, and ask't me whither I would go with them to Christ; my Soul made a speedy and thankfull reply, my Heart and Love is his, and his will I be for ever. O that I were once safe in his Arms! O that I might live with him, and never part! O when shall it be! *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.* I remember I have heard it reported of that Reverend, and Holy man of God Master Allen (who lived at as high a rate as most on this side Perfection and Glory) that he was before he died in very rare seraphique raptures of Joy and Love, so that he could not chuse but burst out into unusual Expressions of Praise, such as these: Ten thousand praises to the King of Saints for the freeness, and riches of his Grace to any poor Soul; let every corner of Heaven ring with *Hallelujahs*; let all the Angels help me to praise the incomparable, lovely, and glorious Jesus. O the Joy that he scalls my Soul with!

who

who would not be Christs Servant? Never did I
 feel such transcendent, pure Divine Joys, ex-
 cept at the Lords Table; and then indeed I have
 been oft so raised in Spirit, that my Nature, ex-
 cept sustained by a Miracle, could scarce bear a
 greater weight of Comfort. O the unspeakable
 vast satisfying Pleasures that Christ in that Ordina-
 nance doth afford some of his sometimes! I have
 heard another dear Brother say, that for some
 years together, he scarce ever failed of some
 notable Token of love at that great Ordinance.
 But I would not, instead of comforting and in-
 couraging the poor Saint, bring him into greater
 fears and dispondings? Judge not therefore
 that this is the portion of all Gods Children, nor
 of any at all times to have such large Discoveries
 as these. Heaven is reserved for Heaven; some
 have a single Messè, some a double, some five
 times more then their Brethren; let all be thank-
 ful if the great Joseph instead of a Prison, give a
 Feast, and in it make himself known to us to be
 our brother; let's love him, admire his con-
 descension, and be ready to wonder that he doth
 so much for us, rather then repine that he doth
 more for others. If thou hast some drawings,
 and longings, and mournings after Christ, and
 a deep sence of thy hardness, unbelief, and world-
 liness, be thankful; it may be this is more whol-
 some entertainment, and fitter for the present
 Temper and Constitution of thy Soul, than those
 Flagon of Wine, perhaps that would fly up into
 thy head, and make thee giddy, proud, and
 wanton, if thou be but well wrought, poor, and
 hungry, thou wilt be thankful for a little; and a
 Crumb that falls from the Table to an humble
 Soul,

Soul, is better entertainment than it knows it deserves, or could without a Miracle of Kindness have expected; mistake me not, as if I would have Christians sit down satisfied with little or no comfort at that Ordinance; no, 'tis quite another design that I am carrying on; 'tis only a hint to quell Ingratitude; my great work at present is, to quicken diligence in Preparation, and to raise the Saints Valuation of that Ordinance, and his Expectations from Christ in it. I say again, Christ usually proportions his entertainment to the diligent, faithful, humble preparations of the Soul to meet him; they that trim their Lamps, and have Oyl in them, are most like to meet that Bridegroom with Joy; he that hath on the Wedding Garment, can't miss of a Welcom; and the good, and faithful Servant is most likely to have the Masters commendation, and to enter into his Joy. But more or less, every sincere Soul at one time or another, will meet with Refreshment at that Supper; and amongst all the rare Dishes that are served up, no question but some will be suitable (if not all) to a hungry, Spiritual Stomack. I can scarce leave this sweet Subject, the time draws nigh, and the Servants are sent out to invite, and thou, O my Soul, art one of the Guests that are bidden. Hark, methinks I hear a Royal Proclamation, *Whosoever is athirst, let him come and drink of the Waters of Life freely*: Methinks the silver Trumpet of the Gospel, and Divine Love sounds a Jubilee: Methinks the Air echoes with a strong Harmony, somewhat like that, *Luke 1. 14. Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, Good will toward men. Don't the very Heavens ring with these Blessed Words, My*
Saviour

*Saviour! a Saviour! a Mighty Redeemer! a
 Pardon! a Pardon! Liberty! Liberty! a glo-
 rious Liberty!* And again the Congregations of
 the Saints, and Redeemed ones cry, *Hallelujah,
 Hallelujah, Hallelujah.* I had thought to have
 done, but the Feast is so sweet I must fall on a-
 gain: Here's no Surfeiting, the more I feed, the
 more hungry; and yet the more satisfied, the
 more delighted: Here's nothing but Fulness,
 Sweetness, and love may be written upon every
 Dish; the Royall noble everlasting Bounty, may
 be proclaimed before every Course: All the dif-
 mal Bonds are thrown in and Cancelled; all our
 Depts forgiven and paid, the great Surety shews,
 the Acquaintance long since granted in the Court
 of Heaven, now its given into the Court of Con-
 science. The bloody War is concluded by a hap-
 py, and firm Peace: God is no longer a Judge,
 an Enemy, but now the Soul hears such
 words, Friend, Father, Husband. The Chal-
 lenges of Law, Conscience, and Satan, are now
 silenced, the Inditements against the Soul are all
 quashed, the soul may walk now at liberty, and
 fear no Arrest; who can lay any thing to the
 charge of Gods Elect? Its Christ that Justifies,
 who can condemn. Christ saith it, swears it,
 seals it, it cannot but be true, why art thou then
 cast down poor Soul, and why art thou disquiet-
 ed? Christ hath made a Blessed exchange with
 thee, he hath drank the bitter Cup, and offers
 thee the sweet which is spiced with Grace and
 Love; Christ hath purchased the Crown for
 thee, and taken the Cross to himself, he took
 the Rags, and gives thee the Robes, he became
 Poor, that thou mayst become Rich, he emptied
 him-

himself that thou mayest be filled ; he was esteemed as nothing, that thou mightest from worse than nothing possess all things ; and what now remains, but that with the greatest Gratitude, you accept of Christ's Offer, whensoever he invites thee to his Table ? What dost thou better become thee, than the deepest Resentment of the highest kindness, and a grateful Closure with all the Overtures of Divine Goodness ? O happy are the People that are admitted to this Intimacy ! Happy are the Souls that know the Worth, the use of this Ordinance, and make it their business wisely to improve it. O what an Opportunity have such of Christ here ! What Request may they not then have granted ! And when Christ is giving, what will he, what can he deny them which have his Heart already ? I have been the more large in this, because it was the particular Request of one of my Brethren a Reverend Minister, that in the next Edition, I would not forget that Ordinance in which God usually doth most signally discover his Love to his People.

III. DIRECTION.

If you would get Acquaintance with God, get Christ along with you, when you go to God. You are like to speed no way so soon as this Way ; Nay, let me say, all that I have said before signifies nothing at all without This. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we can be saved, but by the Name of Christ ; and whosoever comes to the Father by Him, He will in no wise cast out. God can't deny his own Son any thing,

he can never forget that great undertaking of his, by which he glorified his Fathers infinite Justice, and infinite Love, and did him more Honour than all the Saints and Angels in the World. His Son the Lord Christ, hath such an interest in his Father, that he can as soon despise his own Honour, as to refuse any Request that is presented to him, by his Son. If Christ come unto him, and say, Father, here is a poor sinner that I have undertaken for, and that flew to me for Refuge, Look upon him for my sake; Why the Fathers Arms are presently open; he will not reject his Sons Petitions. The truth of it is, this is the greatest cause of the miscarriages of poor Creatures, that go about to do that themselves, and by themselves, which they can never do alone. They go to God all alone, and no wonder then they mett with a frown; for there is no Name under Heaven, by which a man can be saved, but by the Name of Christ, and out of Christ: God is a Consuming Fire; and there is but one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. And there is but one Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. That which *Joseph* said of *Benjamin*, God saith of Christ, except you bring *Benjamin* along with you, you shall not see my Face; except you bring Christ along with you, you shall not see my Face. There is a notable Story which is commonly by Divines applied to our present purpose, and that not without good Reason; it is concerning a Law among the *Molossians*, where whosoever came to the King with his Son in his Arms, should be accepted into Favour, let his Fault be what it will. So let a man be what he will before, yet if he come to God in Christ, he can't be thrust away.

O therefore, if thou wouldest have any countenance from God, beg for a Christ to bear thee Company into the Presence of God. I will tell you this for your Comfort, Christ hath a loving design in his Heart to do such Offices of Kindness for poor Malefactors that understand something of their Danger. If you see your self lost for want of Reconciliation with God, Christ he stands ready to lead you into his Fathers House. O did you but know how willing he is to bring undone lost Penitents to God, it would make your heart leap within you for joy. Behold how oft he asks after you; what doth that Sinner mean to Ruine himself? I would with all my heart bring him out of all those Perplexities, and undertake to make God and him Friends, if he would be but ruled by me; and upon this account he sends up and down many Hundreds of his Ministers to tell sinners as much, that they may not be undone Everlastingly. Doth not Wisdome call? Doth not Christ Plead the Case, and Expostulate with sinners? And who would not, that hath any understanding at all of his state out of Christ, with all possible thankfulness be encouraged to accept of his Kindness? Christ hath done as much as this comes to already for many Millions, and his Father never said to him, Son, why do you trouble your self and me with so many of these wretched Creatures, let them alone to take their course. Where did God ever express himself in this manner? Did he ever take it unkindly that his Son should every day bring such Guests to his House, and be continually begging one boon or other for them, or putting up some Petitions upon their Account, or pleading with his Father for

them when they do offend. Is God displeased a such work as this? Is he not as willing to receive such, as his Son is to bring them? and both Father and Son more willing to save the sinner than he is to be saved? O Kindness; Christ loves the Sinner better than he loves himself! And as I said before, so I say again, the Father doth not grutch any thing that Christ gives, or doth for poor sinners. The Righteousness of Christ, it is that Wedding Garment, in which we may sit at the Kings Table, and are welcome, these are the Robes of our Elder Brother, in which we can't miss of our Fathers Blessing. O how many poor Creatures have walked in the Dark many Years, because they have not been brought off from themselves, but have sought that by themselves, which is to be sought only by Christ; because they have looked for that in the Law, which is to be found only in the Gospel: and no wonder their business went on so slowly, when they went the quite contrary way to work. When any comes to God without Christ, they come like *Simon Magus*, with their own money in their hand to buy a great Commodity, which is not to be Purchased with such kind of Coyn. If you come to God through Christ, you may come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; but if you come without him, you do but come with Madness upon the Point of the Flaming Sword.

V. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, come much where he is wont to be, frequent his house, lye always at the Doors of Wisdom, engage much in his Ordinances. This was that course that *David* took when he wanted Gods company, away he goes to the house of God; and, O what earnestness doth he use when the doors of the Lords Tabernacle were shut, to get them open again? What moan doth he make when he was for sometime sequestred by his enemies, from the enjoyment of God in his publick Ordinances? *As the Hart pants after the water-brooks, so did his Soul pant after God, the living God.* O when should he appear before him? When should he again behold the out-goings of God in his Sanctuary, as sometimes he had? *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, saith he, O Lord God of Hosts! And one thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in thy house, and see thee, and enquire in thy Tabernacle, Psal. 42. Psal. 48. Psal. 27. 4.* He thought God was like to be found no where so soon as at his own house; he was sure he was never from home. *David* can never forget what usage, and entertainment he was wont to have there, and that this great Friend was used to have a standing Table, an open house; and that when his Guests were set, he would come and bid them welcome; eat O friends, drink ye, drink abundantly, O beloved. See therefore that you get into that part of Gods house where he doth most frequently come, get under the most powerfull Ministry; O hear the Word with all the Reverence, Attention,

Y 3

and

and affection that you can for your Soul ; miss not any opportunity that God puts into their hand, lest that should be the time in which you might have met with God ; Lye at the pool of *Bethesda*, and wait for the moving of the Waters ; set you selves as in the house of God, and remember though you see not God, that he is always present in all places, but he is there more especially present, where his people meet together to attend upon him in his own Ordinances ? Wherefore when you come to hear the Word, set your self as in the presence of God, and hear as for your life and Soul, *Deut. 32. 46. Set your hearts to all the words that you shall hear ; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life. Isa. 55. 2. 3. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight it self in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your Soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* He that hath ears to hear let him hear, what the mighty *Jehovah* is speaking to his Soul. Wherefore I say it again, set your self as in the very immediate presence of God ; and when you hear a word that you are very nearly concerned in, put up such a short Ejaculation as this : Now Lord, strike this hard heart of mine ; now Lord, come in I beseech thee ; O that this word might be the key which might open my heart for the King of Glory to come in ? O command thy loving kindness this day to break into my Soul ? O that this might be the day in which Salvation might come into my house ! O that this might be the man that might be my Spiritual Father, that this might be the Messenger one among a thousand, that may bring me good tidings ? O that

that this might be the sentence, that this might be the hour of Love? O that this might be the day that I may have in everlasting remembrance? O that I might presently without any more delay, set out for *Canaan*? Cry out with as much earnestness as that poor man did, who brought his possessed child before Christ; O Lord I have brought my unbelieving heart before thee to cure, it exposes me a thousand times to unspeakable hazards; but Lord, If thou wilt but speak the word, it shall be possessed: I would believe, Lord help my unbelief. I have brought my hard heart before thee, Lord soften it, and let me not go from time to time with these dreadful diseases hanging about me, to infect, and undo my self and others. O melt me, O Lord, melt me, and let me have such a look from thee, as *Peter* once had, which made him to go out and weep bitterly. But I shall speak a little more of this nature under another Direction.

VI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must get acquainted with some of his Friends, and they will do all they can, and be glad of it too, to help you to be acquainted with him; they will not spare to give you their utmost assistance in this great business. And when they shall hear you asking, what you shall do to know God, they are glad at their Heart, and will not be at quiet till they have got thee home with them to their Fathers House; they watch for your Soul, and no greater Joy then to help forward such a work as this, then to be employed any way in the service

service of your Souls. They are glad when they hear any saying, let us go to the house of the Lord, and asking the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward. O! Christians society, good company is of exceeding use ; one good servant in a house, the whole Family may fare the better for him. *Laban* and *Potiphar*, though ignorant enough in Spirituals, could not but observe this, that the Lord blessed their Families, for the sake of one godly Servant. I do not speak this only with respect to Temporals, because of that Diligence, and Faithfulness in their places, that Religion will put them upon ; but with respect to Spirituals, they will be dropping something that may tend to the awakening, and convincing of their sleepy, unbelieving, ignorant companions : they have an inward principle which puts them upon communicating what Grace they have received ; they know the more they impart to others, the more they shall have themselves ; they have a Compassion for Souls, and would fain have as many as they can, along with them to Heaven ; they will be teaching little Children to Pray, and Instilling something that the very Babes may set forth Gods Praises, and they will be pleading with God for them. But this only by the by. Now if those that are gracious, endeavour what they can to bring in those that are open enemies ; how much more will they be ready to give all the help they can to you that earnestly desire it ? Now when any one comes to this pass, that he sees a difference between the godly and the wicked, and to say that the righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour, and to have an earnest desire to associate themselves with them, it

is a very great sign that God hath an intention to do such a Soul good. Wherefore if you would be brought to the knowledge of God, go speedily to them that know him well; and they will tell you great things of him, and how they came first acquainted with him, and how this acquaintance hath been kept; they will tell you where they first met him, they will give you to understand, that at such and such a time, when they little thought of God, they were strangely brought acquainted with him. When they came (out of Fashion, or curiosity, or to laugh at him that taught them, or it may be to pick some Quarrel with him) to hear such a man; they were made to see what they never took any great notice of before, that they were in an undone condition by Nature, and that except Christ would pitty them, there was no remedy, but to Hell they must go; whereas before, they thought themselves as safe as could be: But then they saw that it was no light matter to be out of Christ, and Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*. After this, they were made to understand something of Christs undertaking for poor lost sinners, and they heard of his exceeding willingness to receive the chiefest of sinners, and that then they began to see an excellency in his love, and goodness, and to be somewhat more taken with the kindness of Christ than ever they were before, and they felt some longings after the precious Jesus. O that they had but a Christ for their Souls? and that after this they were by the Spirit of God, in some measure enabled to cast themselves at the feet of Christ for mercy, and that upon his own terms, knowing that if mercy came

came not that way to them, they must sink for ever; and that upon this act of Recumbency after they had for some time waited upon God in the way of his ordinances, they began to taste and relish the things of God, and at last they met him whom their Souls loved. Inquire of them, I say, and they will talk thus to you, and tell you also, that there was a time wherein they were foolish, disobedient, and unto every good Work Reprobate, and miserably neglectful of their Souls, that they did not at all mind their Eternal welfare, but made light of Christ, made a mock of sin, and made nothing of Eternal Damnation. And they will direct, and encourage you also. Let me tell you, they have an interest in God, and their prayers for you may be more advantagious than you are aware of. Yet I would not that you should make Christs of the Saints, nor forget what is the work of the Mediator alone. Saints are to be valued, but Christ is to be valued infinitely more. Get acquainted with some warm rare experienced Christian, and make him your bosom Friend, and observe him, and you shall see much of the beauty of Religion shining in him, and you shall see how chearfully, and comfortably he walks; now ask him what his practice is, and go you, and do likewise, have a care of harbouring ill thoughts of the people of God, or for the sake of one Hypocrite of censuring a thousand sincere Ones. Judge you whether this be just, and equal doing? How would you like it, if one that bears some Relation to you should do some vile abominable thing, and bring himself to an untimely end, and people should say, all the whole Family is like him? though it may

may be you are grieved to the very heart, that such a thing should be done by any in the world, much more by any that bears any kind of Relation to your self. I tell you as contemptibly as the world speak of the godly, they are not such odious Creatures as they are presented to be. The Saints that are not Troublers, but Peace-makers; they love to make peace between man and man, and what in them lies also between God and man: Your converse with such as fear the Lord, will make you like them, at least they will endeavour as much. (*Ar. Epiſt. 1. 3. c. 16.*) He ſpoke no untruth, who ſaid, *That company is of an aſſimulating Nature. A living coal laid to a heap of dead ones may kindle them all; but they are more like, except it be blown-up, to put the live one quite out; therefore ſaith the ſame Author, You muſt be very cautious of your company.* It is ſtoried of Socrates, that he had a rare Art of making his familiar Friends of his mind. Some active Chriſtians take as much pains to make their familiars of Chriſts mind, *Prov. 13. 20. He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall yet be wiſer, but a company of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed, Prov. 10. 10, 21, 33. The tongue of the juſt is as choiſe Silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the Righteous feed many; but fools dye for want of wiſdom. The lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked ſpeaketh froward things.* Such as theſe will do what they can to make you out of love with ſin, and in love with God. Such as theſe will from their own experience be ſetting forth the goodneſs of God, and tell you that which may ſtand you inſtead as long as you live; it may be they may tell you, that when God began firſt to

work

work upon their Soul, he was pleased to make use of the particular Application, and the spiritual Conversation of such a Christian Relation ; and, when God came in with Comfort, and spake peace, such a one led them to such a Promise, which was like a Cordial to their fainting Soul. When they were abroad (they will tell you) and were necessitated to the company of them which were Strangers to the Life of Religion ; and were at such a time troubled with horrible Temptations ; that they were in a Wilderness-condition, and thought that never any that walked Heaven-ward, could be in the like state : But now, when they got acquainted with the People of God, they found, that as Face answered Face in a Glass, so their Experience, and the Experience of many of the dear Children of God was exactly alike ; and that that which they thought none in the World could parallel, they find that most of the Christians that they meet with, know as well as themselves, and at the first hearing, are able to go on with the Story before them ; so that, they have sometimes wondered how any one living should know their Hearts and Thoughts so well, to whom they did not Communicate them. I think it not altogether impertinent here to insert an Observation of mine own : I remember, when I was once speaking concerning the duty of Christians, in Relation to their Unconverted Friends, and urging them upon doing what they could for God and Souls, in the places where God hath set them : In speaking to this subject, I said, that there was not the meanest Christian, but might be an Instrument of the Conversion of a Soul : Upon this, I rehearsed a couple of Experiences that I had

of

of two persons, strangers one to the other, who gave this Account of their Conversion; they were upon the matter both alike, and therefore I shall tell but one of them, which take as follows. There was a Poor, Civil, yet very Carnal Creature, a Servant in a Religious Family, whodid from his Soul Abhor the Spiritual Conversation of those in the Family, insomuch that he was resolved to run away from his Service, he was so weary of such doings: But one Night, hearing a strange sound somewhere, he arose out of his Bed, and went to listen what was the matter: Upon which, he heard one distinctly praying on the other side of the Wall, he still hearkning, heard one Praying very earnestly for him (who did not know but that he might be Asleep) and opening the condition of his Soul so particularly, and with so much Tenderness, that he was wonderfully awakened to think that one that he hated should so much love him, and pity his Soul, and to consider how it was possible any one in the World should know his Thoughts so well as that Person did, who prayed for him; upon this he began to be very much Startled to think of his Condition, concluding thus, surely I am in a lamentable state, and they see it, or else they would never do as they do; they are praying for me, when I am asleep, they love me when I hate them; upon this the man was very much troubled, and his trouble daily encreased, 'till he was forced to open his Condition to the Person, who had been praying for him, which was a poor Maid-Servant: upon which the Work of Regeneration was carryed on very sweetly, and the Man became an excellent Christian, whereas the Instrument that God

God used in this great work was but a poor servant. Now when I Rehearsed this thing which was the Condition of two, as I said before, a third person stood by (whom I never saw in my life before) who fell a Sweating for trouble, that any of his Friends should tell such a thing of him, to me, and thought I had meant himself in all the particulars, though I heard not a word of the man before in my Life. This by the by. I could not but hint this for the encouragement of Parents to get their Children into Families that are really Religious, and to Encourage all to Associate themselves to such as fear the Lord. You see by what hath been spoken, that Acquaintance with the People of God, may be of great use for the bringing the Soul Acquainted with God.

VII. DIRECTION.

If you would be Acquainted with God; entertain all the Messengers that he sends to you kindly. When God Calls, Answer, and when he sends any of His Servants to you, bid them Welcome; let the feet of those which bring glad Tidings be Beautiful in your Eye; do not think much if they deal plainly and roundly with you, know that it is out of Love to your Souls (God is their Witness) they see that your condition requires it, and that a man in your state is not to be jested with. The Lord knows that they take little pleasure in grieving of People; they do it that you may rejoyce for ever, they watch for your Souls, and therefore you must account them Worthy of double Honour. But of all the Messengers that God sends, have the greatest care of dealing un-
kindly

kindly with, and grieving his Spirit; when you have any motions upon your Soul by the Spirit, labour to cherish them with all the care and tenderness that you can: Turn not Convictions away with, I am not at leisure; or I will hear you of these things when I have a more convenient Season: But as soon as you find your heart begin to relent, cry out unto the Lord, and say, O Lord, I beseech thee, carry on thy work effectually upon my Soul. O that I may have through work! O let not these Convictions wear off from my Soul, till they end in a real Conversion. O let me not prove but a Half-Christian! Any thing in the World, Lord, so that I may but be made a Christian in good earnest! O let me not return with the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow that is washed, to her Wallowing in the Mire! Deliver me, O God, from sinning away these things, and getting into a cold World, and from shaking off all, lest I prove worse than ever, and my latter end be more miserable than my beginning. Labour to be very Curious in the taking notice of Gods Absence or Presence; and when you find your Soul raised in any Duty, and your Heart somewhat drawn out after God, then be sure to own Gods goodness, and bless the Lord for it; Record his Kindness, forget not his Mercy, pass not over such great things in silence. Little do Men think what a hazard they run, when they quench the Motions of Gods Spirit. You may Reade in the 5. *Cant.* how dearly the Spouse had like to have paid for such an unkindness? What, shall God send his Spirit to visit you? Shall the infinite Majesty so far condescend as to knock at your Door, and will not you open?

why then, you may thank your selves if he never knock more. But if you will now open to him, he will come into you, and sup with you, and you shall sup with him.

VIII. DIRECTION.

Seek his Acquaintance most earnestly if you would have it. O why do Men and Women jest with matters of the greatest Weight and Importance in the World? What do people mean to play with their Souls, the Wrath of God, and Damnation? O Sinners, have you nothing else to play with? No lower matters to sport with? Believe it Sirs, Heaven and Glory are not got with sitting still with your Hands in your Pockets. We think it worth the while to Rise Early, and to sit up Late, to get an Earthly Estate; we count it no foolish thing for a man to be very diligent about his Worldly Affairs. The poor Country-man Plows and Sows, Harrows, Weeds, Reaps, Inns, Thresheth and a great deal more, before he can eat his Bread: And shall we look for a Rich Crop, and do nothing at all but Eat and Drink, and Sleep? Is this the way to be Rich? Is this the way to be happy for ever? If you intend to do any thing in Religion to any purpose, you must buckle to your Business at another guess rate than most of the Professors of the World do: We must take as much pains about our Souls, as men do about their Bodies or Estates. Is there any comparison between the Soul and the Body; between a Worldly Estate, and an Heavenly Inheritance? Hath a man more Reason to look after tricking-up his Body that must Dye, or look after the Adorning

adorning of his Soul that must live somewhere for ever? Which are matters of the greatest consequence, eating and drinking, pampering the flesh, and taking our pleasure; or looking after Life, Salvation, and Eternal Joy? Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, *That we must strive to enter in at the strait Gate*? Is it a bare seeking that will serve the turn? Will a *Lord have mercy upon me*, and bowing the knee, do as well as the greatest seriousness and diligence in the World? Do you think that God will be put off with the skin and garbage instead of sacrifice, with the shell instead of the kernel, with chaff instead of the Corn? Doth not Christ say, *That many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*? O why do not lazy Professors read the Scriptures with trembling? Let all those that are angry with us for putting them upon making Religion their business, and using all diligence to make their calling and election sure, Reade that one Scripture over again, *Luk. 13. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, &c.* It was Christ who spake that word. If we tell you of the danger of a formal Religion, you will soon fall upon us as Enemies to your peace, and those which impose too much strictness upon you: We therefore do here produce our Commission for what we say, or rather we desire you but to reade your selves what Christ spake, as touching this matter. O it might justly make a Christians heart to Ake, to think how many thousands of Professors will be disowned by Christ in that day; who will make many fair pleas for themselves, and pretend a great deal of acquaintance with him. Consider I beseech

beseech you, here is no fear of Excess ; never any man in the World that was too Solicitous about his Salvation, never any man took too much pains for Heaven. Awake, O sleeper, what meanest thou ? Arise, and call upon thy God. If you make any thing of the loss of a Soul, look about you ; if you think the wrath to come considerable, be serious ; if you would not be burnt by the fire of his Indignation, you must take hold of his strength, and make peace with him, and God will be at peace with you, *Isa. 27. 5.* It is not without cause, that the Prophet doth complain, *Isa. 64. 7.* *There is none that calls upon thy Name that stirs up himself to take hold on thee. There is none that calls upon Gods Name !* One would think that that were strange ; What none call upon his Name, when so many of them made many Prayers, as you have it in the first of *Isaiah* ? What did they nothing but look upon one another, when they had their Solemn Assemblies ? Did they say nothing to God, when they came before him ? Did they do nothing at all in that *58. of Isaiah*, when they are said to seek him daily, when they seemed to delight in his way ? Yet in Gods esteem, all this goes for nothing at all, this prayer is no prayer, this is only wording of it with God : But prayer it is another kind of thing, it is the stirring up of the Soul, and a wakening all it's strength to wrestle with God, to lay hold upon God, and to prevail with the Almighty ; and where are such as these to be found, who is this that engages his heart in the service of God ? It is one thing to engage the tongue, and another thing to engage the heart. Men come to pray with a common Spirit, and are many times weary of the

the work before they have well begun it ; what they do, they do it lifelessly : They can follow their worldly employments with life and delight. They have Male in their flock, but that's too good for God ; a lame, blind, starved weak thing must serve his turn : And is this the way to have the blessing ? Are such as these like to have any thanks for their kindness ? Let them try how any of their Friends would take such a present. Now would you have the Blessing of Acquaintance with God, you must wrestle for it, and not let God go without it : You must be *Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord* ; you must *fight the Good fight of Faith, and lay hold on Eternal Life* : You must grasp about Christ, as a man that is a drowning would grasp anything that were thrown out to save him : You must use *all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure* : You must *work out your Salvation with fear and trembling* : You must *seek for Wisdom as for Silver, and search for her as for hidden Treasure*. Then shall you *understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*. What excellent thing is there, that is got without pains ? Whoever came to be an Exquisite curious Artist in any skill whatever, that never served an Apprentiship to it, nor at the least gave his mind to it ? Where is there a famous Physician that never studied in his life ? Who gets a Victory by sleeping and carelessness ? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth when he goes all the ways that can be to make himself a beggar ? Doth the Husband-man look for a good Crop without plowing or Sowing ? Why then should we expect such great things as Heaven, Eternal happiness, and the favour of God, with-

out looking after them. Whatsoever the Lazy formal Professor may say, the Kingdom of Heaven is not obtained thus: there must be Running, Watching, Fighting, Conquering, holding fast, holding out, and all little enough; it requires all the strength of thy soul to engage in this great work; it requires some resolution to do such a work, as every Christian must do, or else his Religion signifies little. Further, it calls for some time too, it is not a thing to be minded, now and then by the by, between sleep and wake, when the Devil and the World have had as much service as they call for. Were it for your bodies that I were now pleading; were you like to get any great matter in the World by following of my Directions; could you be shew'd a way how to get a great estate, honours, and long life, I am verily perswaded a few words might prevail much. Why, if you will believe the word of God, I am telling you of other kind of things than these be, greater matters by far; and yet how little are Men and Women affected? As if we spoke but in jest always, when we spoke about things that did concern Souls! How little time do men spend in their inquiry into these things? Ask *Epietus* (*Ench. c. 63.*) And he will tell you that it is a sign of a low Soul, to bestow much time upon thy body, and the thoughts of it, and little upon the Soul; to be long eating, and long drinking, and long a dressing, and short in Prayer, short in the thoughts of the Soul, and short in the service of God; and that it is a sign of a base degenerate Spirit to be very curious about toys, and inconsiderable trifles, and to be negligent about matters of the greatest importance, to slubber o-

ver the great works of Religion with the greatest
 slightness. Remember, O man, thy great work,
 it is to take care of thy Soul, to look after a Com-
 panion, a Friend for thy Soul, to get food and
 cloathing for thy Soul; that that famish not with
 hunger and cold. To be indifferent in all exter-
 nals is the greatest prudence; but to be indiffe-
 rent about Spirituals and Eternals is the greatest
 madness. We are all Souldiers and must fight
 in such a War wherein we must never lay down
 our Arms. The favour of God is worth the stri-
 ving for, it is as much as Heaven and Glory is
 worth. If your estate or life lay at stake, would
 you not be willing to use all the interest you could
 to make the Judge your friend? Would you go up
 and down laughing as if you had nothing to do?
 would you eat and drink as merrily as ever, and
 say, it is but dying, it is but being a beggar, it is
 but the undoing of my wife and children? Would
 not you look upon a man that should argue at
 this rate to be little better than Frantick? and
 I pray which is most considerable, the death of the
 body, or the death of the Soul; the loss of a tem-
 poral, or the loss of an eternal inheritance. Most
 mens diligence in Temporals will condemn their
 negligence in Spirituals. Christ said, *Seek ye first*
the Kingdom of Heaven, and the righteousness there-
of; but most men say, I will seek first the Earth,
 and the glory thereof; and if God will give me
 Heaven and Happines after I have served the
 Devil and the world as long as I can, I shall be con-
 tended to have it. No such matter, never expect it.
 God must sooner cease to be than to gratifie you
 in this. Wherefore do you think, did *David* fol-
 low

How his work so close? Why did all those Noble Worthies in the Church of old, take so much pains? Why should they not much stick to venture estates, and lives too? Will you condemn them all as guilty of too much curiosity, and unnecessary preciseness? Do you think that their labour was in vain? Are all those disappointed who willingly parted with present things for future things? I must tell you, if you expect to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven, you must do as they did. Heaven will not be obtained now upon any lower term than then. Your Souls are as precious as their's, and Heaven will be as well worth your minding as theirs, and God will look upon you as well as upon them, if you will value his favour as they did. Never look to have God give you that which you will not thank him for. What do you say after all this? Will you sit down before your work is done? Open thine eyes, and consider what thou hast to do, and then tell me if it be not the greatest folly imaginable to be slight in these Affairs. O how can'st thou eat, or drink, or sleep, whilst thou hast such a great work to do which is undone? O give not sleep to thine eyes, or slumber to thine eye-lids, but deliver thy self from the hand of the Hunter, and as a Bird from the hand of the Fowler. Go to the Ant thou sluggard: Consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, over-seer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her meat in the Harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. And

and will you now labour to get acquaintance with God, as you would to get Food for your body; will you endeavour as much to make sure of his love, as you would to make sure of a Pardon, in case of the forfeiture of your Life? If so, we have some hopes, the work may have some considerable Issue.

IX. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, be much in expostulating the case with God, in urging those Arguments which the Scripture doth afford you in such a case. Take with you words, and come unto the Lord, and spread your Requests before him, and say, *O Lord, thou hast sent thy Servants the Ministers, and hast invited me to come unto thee, and thou offeredst Peace and Reconciliation, and to be Acquainted with me. O God, I desire from my Soul, to come upon thy call, and would fain be Acquainted with thee. I see my self in an undone State, while I am a Stranger to thee: But O Lord, I have a Cursed base Heart that keeps me back from thee, and I can't tell what in the world to do. O Lord, I beseech thee help thy poor Creature to come unto thee, lead me by the Hand, let thy goodness and love constrain me, Conquer me by thy Kindness; come Lord into my Soul, and let me see thy Face, and look upon thee till I am in love with thee. O why art thou as a Stranger to me? Wilt thou forsake me for ever? Shall I be one of those thine Enemies which shall be Slain before thy Face? Shall I be one of those that shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? O Lord, pity, pity, pity, for Christ his sake, a poor Creature that would fain love thee, and be acquainted with thee. I am convinced that I must be damned without thee, and come to thee*

*of my self I cannot. O draw me ! O carry me ! O compel me ! constrain me, make me willing in the day of thy power : I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard for me, my lusts are too strong for me, my Temptations are too many for me to conquer of my self. O Lord, help me. Turn me, and I shall be turned. Pluck my feet out of the snare, or I shall be utterly destroyed for ever. Forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy servant. Tell God that thou hast heard of his goodness and mercy, and that the King of Israel is a mercifull King, and that it is his nature to pity. Say to him, O I am a poor undone creature, and wilt thou send me away without mercy ? will the God of Grace send me away without Grace ? Hast thou not called me, O God ? thy servants tell me so, O Lord speak and give me ears to hear ; O Lord I am come in upon thy merciful Proclamation, and I desire to lay my self at thy feet ; mercy Lord, mercy upon what terms thou pleasest, Didst thou not say in thy Word, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, and buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without price.* Have not thy servants pleaded with me to come ? and hast not thou sent for me ? O ! a blessing, a blessing for me, even for me ? O my Father ! Hast thou not a blessing for me ? Shall I be sent away as I came ? O Lord, I come at thy Word ! Do not say unto me, Be gone out of, my sight. I cannot go, I will not go ; whither shall I go from thee ? For thou hast the words of Eternal Life. Though I cannot say, Be just to me a Saint, yet I will say, Be merciful to me a sinner. You may read more in *R. A.* his first part of his *Vindicie Pietatis*, pag. 232. the whole Treatise is excellent. Plead the blood of Christ ; you may safely say,*

say, that if there be not enough in Christ to save you, you do not desire Salvation : for in him there is all fulness. You may plead your own absolute necessity. Tell God, that if ever poor Creature in the World had need of mercy, you have ; tell him that you are resolved not to be content without his love. You may plead his promise, in which he hath said, *That he will take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh ; and that he will put his fear in our hearts, and write his laws in our inward parts.* You may plead also the power of God, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself ; and many such like arguments, you may find in many places in the Scripture. But because I have touched upon this before, I shall pass this by.

X. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, look after it speedily, defer not a Moment, your enemy is Marching on apace, you may be Surprized, your soul is halting upon it's Eternal estate, your glass is almost run, there are but a few sands behind ; therefore seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near : Ere long it will be too late ; Wherefore what thou dost, do quickly. What is the Voice both of Scripture and Providence ? Doth not the Word of God say *Now*, and commend the present time above all. Acquaint *now* thy self with him ; Remember *now* thy Creatour ; Turn *now* unto the Lord. Let a poor Heathen (*Epiſt. En. c. 75.*) shame you into a greater speed in this necessary work. I shall translate his words into English : *How long, saith he, will you defer the looking after the*
the

best things ? How long will you abuse your Reason ? Have you not heard such Precepts which you ought to agree to, and you seemed very well to like of ? What kind of Teacher is it that you stay for ? For whose coming do you defer, before you will mend and turn ? You are come now to years of discretion (if I should say you were not, you would be angry) if you will neglect and delay, and add one delay to another, if you will add one put off to another, and make one resolution and purpose after another, and set one day after another, in which you will think of these things ; consider that all this will do you no good, for all your resolutions and promises, for all that I see, you are like to die a common man, therefore now live as a perfect growing Man ; and follow that which is most Excellent unalterably. If any thing of difficulty intervene, remember that now is the time for you to shew what respect you have for your God and your Soul. Remember the Goal is not far off, and that now you must not falter, and that as you demean your self now, it may be you may be happy or miserable while you have a Being. This is the Language of that excellent Moralist. I add, what is it, O Sinner, that thou stayest for ? Is it for the day of Judgment ? Would you be taught by Flames, the worth of Time ? You may then indeed learn ; but believe it, your Knowledge and Learning will do you little good ; you may then learn what it is to be miserable, but you can't learn how to get out of it, you will know what you have lost, but then will never know how to repair your Losses. How many Thousands of them which have set a day, in which they would return and Repent, have set
and

and set and set it again, and what with one thing or other they could not be at leasure to repent till they came to Hell; and there indeed they have leisure enough to repent, and they do repent too, if Hell-Repentance would do any thing: I believe that all that come there do repent and believe too more than they did while they were alive; but then it's too late. They that are now in those dreadful Flames, many of them thought, it may be, of repenting before they died as well as you, and did just as you do. O that you would understand your selves before your state be like theirs! How infinitely doth it concern you to improve time, and to comply with the present tenders of mercy that are made to you: For ere long it may be too late for you too. O know this therefore, that *now* thy God makes thee a gracious offer of pardon; and if you refuse *now*, this may be the last time, this may be the very cast for Eternity. God may say before to morrow, *This night thy soul shall be required of thee.* Go to therefore, you that talk of trading for the great things of Eternity, I do not know when, thirty or forty years hence, Do you not know that your life is but a blast? When your breath goes out of your Nostrils, you are not sure that you shall draw it in again. What then do you mean to talk of delay? have you not staid long enough already? consider man what thou dost. He that saith he will be good to morrow, he saith he will be wicked to day. And what if God should say, thou shalt have the pleasure of sin to day, and the sorrow of sin to morrow? Thou shalt be hardned to day, and damned to morrow? If your house were on fire, you would scarce say, I will go and sleep

sleep four or five hours, and then I will rise and call my Neighbours to help to quench it. If your Child were a drowning, you would scarce say, I must needs stay till I have drunk a flaggon or two more, and about half an hour hence it may be I may go and see whether I can get a Boat to help him out. If you were condemned to dye to morrow, you would scarce say, I will have Musick, and Sack, and good company all night, and then I will send a Messenger if I can get one to ride a Hundred Mile to try whether he can get a Pardon for me. Yet thus for all the World thou dost do in the great affairs of thy immortal Soul. *O the folly of man (saith Seneca) who thinks to begin to live, when a thousand to one but he will be dead and rotten!* I may say, O the madness of sinners, who make account to be looking after Heaven then, when it's likely their Souls may be in Hell! Judge now whether this be wisdom. Now you think time one of the poorest commodities in the World, it's a very Drugg which lies upon your hand, a day or two, a week, a year is no great matter with you: but believe it the case will be altered with a witness ere long. *Seneca* wondred when he heard some asking some of his friends for to spend two or three weeks with them when he saw how easily the request was granted, as if they asked as little as nothing, when they ask'd time of him: *Thus (saith he) one of the preciousst things in the world is thrown away as little worth.* When you come to lie upon your death-bed, we shall have you have other thoughts of time: then, a world, if you had it, for one of those hours, that you could not tell how to spend. You now study how to rob your self of your precious time, you invent
pastimes

pastimes, not considering how swiftly time flies, and how much you will prize it before long. O remember, no body can give you a Moment of that time, when you want it, that you are now so prodigal of. When time is past, if you would give a world to recall it, it could not be: If you would give thousands for the renewing of this Lease, it would be refused. Therefore live quickly. Mans time runs away first. *Optima quæqua dies miseris mortuibus ævi, prima fugit--Seneca.* And then my Author Comments very bravely upon the whole verse.

I think that Proverb, though it be an *Italian* one, is worth our remembring, *He that will lodge well at night, must set out betimes in the morning.* That which keeps us from living to day, is the thoughts of living to morrow, so that we lose this day while we expect the next. *Comenius* speaking of the *Tyger*, saith, *That when he hears the sound of the Trumpet, he tears and bites himself.* This will be the work of the merciless Tygers of the world, that spend their time (in which they should be providing for Eternity) in hunting Gods people, and taking their pleasures; and it may be, think to be a little more mild before they die; but of a sudden the Trumpet sounds, Away, away: and O then what a lamentable taking are they in! How do they wish for time again, or that they had spent that which they had better? Wicked men never knew the worth of time, till they come to a Death-bed, or a while after. O then, they that made nothing of spending thirty to forty years, would lay down all they are worth for one year, one moneth, one day, one hour, but it's then too late. O how do they gnash their teeth!

teeth! With what horreur do they think of past mercies, and future miseries! Men fear generally that Death will come sooner than they would have him; they bewail that their lives are short at the longest, whereas if men would wisely Husband that time that God hath given them, it would be long enough: O happy is that man that hath done his great Work before his Sun is set? O foolish men that complain of God for making their lives so short, and complain not at all of themselves for making them ten times shorter: For most men live not at all the life of Religion, and may be called Dead. Others have a name to live, and yet are little better than the former. Most that live spiritually, begin their life after they have been many years dead; and though we sit and condemn others as guilty of great imprudence in these affairs, yet, how do we at the same time justify them, by being as profusely expensive of precious time as they? O where's the man almost to be found, that doth improve time to as good advantage as he should? Among other Symptomes of a fool, this is none of the least, *To be always beginning to live.* What an unhandsome sign it is to see an old man learning his Letters? O remember man thou hast a great work to do! O remember thy precious time runs away with an unspeakable swiftness! What do you mean, to sit with your hands in your bosom? Look about thee, O sinner, 'tis not time a day for you to be sleeping or playing; Methinks a man in your condition should be up and doing with all the diligence that you could for your Soul, and labouring to make your calling and election sure, methinks we should hear you asking, what you shall

shall do to get a Pardon for your sins, to get God reconciled to you. Methinks you should be enquiring what you should do to redeem your time, and to spend every Moment of it so to the best advantage, as that you may appear chearfully before your Master at night. That I may inforce this weighty Direction, I shall propound a few serious Questions to you.

Quest. 1. Do you think that these things are necessary, or are they not? If they be necessary, why do you not mind them speedily? If they be not necessary, do not look after them at all.

Quest. 2. Do you expect to be in a better capacity to look after these things hereafter? Do you hope for more strength, when you are worn out with sin and age, when your back begins to bend, and your joynts to shake? Do you think you shall be more at leisure, when your work will be much increased? Know this, that sin grows upon you daily, it preys upon your Vitals: He that is not fit to day, will be less fit to Morrow. As for leisure, I must confess you may have leisure enough in another World to think of these things. But I wish you well to consider whether it be great Wisdom to repent in this World, or in another. I would be loath to be repenting in another, it's sad weeping indeed there, where tears shall never be dried up. I have told you oft that God saith, to day, and it is both wickedly and foolishly done of man to say to Morrow. I must tell you but so, that it is a dreadful hazard that every delaying Sinner doth run: It is a question whether God may not deny his Grace, stop the Preachers mouth, stop his ears, and stop your breath: And where are you then with your to Morrow?

morrow? delays in these affairs always cost dear; they have cost many thousands dear already, and if you make no more hast than you have done, they will cost you dear too.

Quest. 3. When would you get acquainted with God? When he hath shut up his door? When would you run his race? When you have lost your legs, or can but creep with Cruiches? Is that the best time to do your work in, when it is next to impossible to do it?

Quest. 4. Who deserves best at your hands, the Devil, the world, and the Flesh, or God! Resolve me this I pray? Whom do you call your Master? Whom have you most reason to make hast for?

Quest. 5. How would you take it, if any of them which depend upon you, should serve you as you serve God?

Quest. 6. Do you think you can make too much hast? Who is afraid of being Rich too soon? Although a man may with reason good enough be afraid of, that which may make his happiness far more uncertain, and his miseries more intolerable. Who fears to make too much hast when his Prince sends for him with speed? O that men did but know, who it is that calls them, and whether they are going, and what they have to do, when they come to their journeys end!

Quest. 7. Are you sure you shall live till you are an hour older? You are strong and healthful it may be, but did you never hear that such have dyed with a very little warning? Have you never known a man well one hour, and dead the next? If you have not, I tell you of one now, that was
very

very well one moment, and dead the next, my self being an eye-witness of it. It's possible there may be but one small moment between a strong working healthful man, and a breathless Corps.

Quest. 5. What do you think will become of you, I ask again, if you put off till it be too late?

Quest. 9. What would you do, if you were sure you should die, or the day of Judgment come before you were a week older?

Quest. 10. Do you think to get acquainted with God in another world, when you do not mind him here? Will God think you own them hereafter, that disown him here? Will he know them in Heaven, who would not know him upon the Earth?

XI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of those things, which keep God and man at a distance, and make the Lord take no pleasure in us. In general, take heed of all sin, *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the Fatherless, and plead the cause of the Widow.* Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, Isa. 1. 17, 18. You must wash your hands in Innocency if you intend to compass his Altar, to sit down at his Table. In *Psal. 101.* David is exceeding desirous of Gods company, and he cries out, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* He thinks long to have a visit from his old friend; he would gladly walk with him. Now what course doth he take to get Gods

company? Why, he goes the best way to work in the world: He will set no wicked thing before his eyes. He knows it is to no purpose for him to expect much of Gods company, while he doth entertain his greatest enemies: therefore he runs them out of doors; I hate, saith he, the works of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. And that God may dwell with him, and make his house, as well as his heart, a Temple for himself, he will not suffer a wicked person to live in it, he will have none in his Family, but such as shall be ready to serve God, and bid this his great Friend welcome.

But more particularly, if you would have much of Gods company, and be intimately acquainted with him; take heed more especially of those particular sins which make God most to estrange himself from us: As,

First, Take heed of Pride: That was the sin which made the first breach between the Creature and the Creator, the sin that sunk the Angels, that made God and them, who were very good Friends once, to be bitter enemies; this hath made the breach infinite, the feud everlasting, the wound incurable. And this made the first Quarrel between God and man. When man thinks himself too good to be but a man, he must be a God; he quickly is too bad to be a man, he is but one remove from the Devil. To be a favourite of his Prince is not enough, except he may step into the Throne; it's therefore high time for his Prince to remove such from his presence to a Prison, from the Court to a Dungeon. It was Pride that cast *Adam* out of Paradise, and do you think that that sin is less hateful to God

God, and less dangerous to man, than it was five thousand years ago? Did it then spend all it's poyson? And can it now do no harm? Do you believe that God will take that into his bosome now, that formerly he abhorred to look upon? Now sin hath increased it's strength and deformity, and heightened it's enmity against the infinite Majesty of the holy *Jehovah*; shall his hatred against it decrease? Will he be more willing to accompany proud aspiring Rebels now than then? No such matter: God is still as holy as ever, and hates all sin, especially pride as much as ever. Do you think that it is for nothing that the word of God speaks so much against this sin? Can it be that the Holy-Ghost would say, *Prov. 11. That every one that is proud, is an abomination to the Lord*, except God did indeed hate them? Why should God threaten such so much, if he took any pleasure in their Society? Though *bandjourn in hand*, yet the proud shall not go unpunished. Now we call the proud happy, but shall we call him so, when the day of the Lord shall burn as fire, and all the proud shall be as stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch. When the Lord shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be like Ashes under his feet, *Mal. 3. 15. and 4. 1, 3.* There is not one proud man in Heaven, I am sure. Nor a proud man upon the Earth, that shall have much of Gods acquaintance. And let me say, he that sets himself above God (for that's the Pride I mean) whilst he stands in that state, must never expect that God should look upon him with any kindness. Heaven and Hell will as soon be agreed, as God and such a one shall be united. The

proud now overlook others that are their betters, and scorn their Maker; but shortly they shall be paid in their own coyn, they shall be scorned too. If all the proud *Nimrods*, *Pharaohs*, and *Belshazzers* in the world should enter into a League, and combine against the Almighty, and say, they will cast away his cords from them, and that they will never debase their noble Spirit so low as to stoop to his commands; yet none of them all shall go unpunished: They shall be like stubble before the devouring flames, and like Chaff before a mighty whirlwind: God is not afraid of their big looks; *Prov. 21. 4. Prov. 6. 17. Prov. 15. 25. Isa. 2. 12. Luke. 1. 51. Jam. 4. 6.* God will cloath himself with Vengeance, and the mighty *Jehovah* will gird his weapon upon his thigh, and march out in fury and indignation, and draw his glittering Sword, and resist the Proud, and teach them what it is to bid defiance to the Lord of Host. We shall soon see, who shall be uppermost, God or they. And when the proud sinner lies conquered at his feet, how doth he with infinite scorn look upon him, and say, behold, the man is become like one of us! This 'tis for man to attempt the dethroning of the Almighty! But it may be, most may think themselves little concerned in that which I now speak; wherefore I must add this one word. Be it known unto thee, O man, whosoever thou art, that thinkest thou hast no pride; I am sure thou art one of those that are in that black Roll which have proclaimed War against Heaven; thou art the man that shall never be acquainted with God whilst thou art in that mind. It may be thou mayst speak Peace to thy self for all this, and

flatter

flatter thy self as if *God* and you were Friends : but let me tell thee, I come with heavy tydings in my mouth to thee: If thou turn not he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow, and made it ready, he hath prepared for thee the Instruments of Death, the day of thy Calamity is near: The dreadfull *Jehovah* is upon his March; and if you ask me whether there be not peace for thee, I answer as *Jehu* did to *Jehoram*, what peace, O haughty sinner, so long as the pride of thy heart is so great, and thy Rebellions against thy Maker so many? There is no Peace saith my *God* to the Wicked. Wherefore as you value your Soul, as you tender your everlasting Salvation, and desire to be owned by the Lord in the day of your distress, take heed of Pride. Go quickly, and humble your self, and make sure your Friend; labour to pull down every high Thought, and every proud Imagination; and let your Arrogant Spirit bow before the mighty God, there is no way will do but this; as you have already heard: you must set the Crown upon the Lord's head, you must lay your selves at his feet, and lick the very dust. Your betters have done so before you, and have thought it their Honor to lie at the feet of Christ; this they look'd upon (as with good reason too) as the first step to preferment. If therefore you would be acquainted with God, take heed of pride.

Secondly, Take heed of a worldly mind. What concord is there between Earth and Heaven? What agreement between *God* and the World? What delight can his Holiness take in him, who had rather be wallowing in the Mud and treading of Clay, than bathing himself in

Divine contemplation : that thinks it higher preferment to sit by his bags of Gold, than to stand in the presence of his God : a greater happiness to be rich, than to be holy ; that had much rather be in a Fair Market, or Exchange, getting money, than with his God, getting Pardon, Grace and Heaven. How pregnant is the Scripture of proofs for the evidencing of this truth ? To name one or two of a hundred, *Rom. 8. 7. To be carnally minded is enmity against God : For it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* What do you say to this Scripture ? Those which walk with God, live in the world, and yet they live above the World ; they all look for a City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It was not for nothing that the Apostle *John* layes so strict a charge upon those which he wrote to, *That they should not love the world, nor the things of the world : For if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in them, 1. John. 2. 15.* Whence is it that so few great ones go to Heaven, and that it is next to impossible for such to be saved ? Is it not because they have chosen *Mammon* for their Friend, rather than God ? He hath their heart, their Love, their Time, their Service, and they have little to spare for God, and therefore God hath but a little happiness, a little heaven, a short glory for them, they shall have but a little of his sweet company, little Acquaintance with him. Why doth *James* speak so terribly to the rich men, & bid them go and weep and howl ? Was it not because their riches were like to undo them ? Did the wealthy man in the Parable live ever the longer for his riches, or fare ever the better for his greatness, when he came into another World ? There is no question

question but he might have more flatteries; there is no doubt, but he hath more worldly Friends; but bring me a man upon the Earth, that lets his heart without controule fly upon the World, cleaves to it, and takes it to be his best friend, that knows God, that's acquainted with his Maker, that prizeth his Redeemer. It was a wise man, who said, that it's absolutely impossible to mind externals and internals, this world and another, with earnestness at the same time: but it was Wisdom it self who said, *That no Servant can serve two Masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and Mammon, Mat. 5. 24. &c.*

3. Take heed of Hypocrisie. Who are the persons that God doth Denounce his dreadful threatnings against? Are they not such as honour him with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from him? With what Abhorrency doth he look upon such, and all that they do? *Isa. 1.* They never bring their heart to visit God with, and therefore they have little reason to expect that he should bring his dainties to entertain them with.

4. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of being acquainted with wicked Company, We Read that many wicked men have fared the better for the Company of the Godly; but we scarce ever heard that any Godly Man ever fared the better for being in the Company of the Wicked, except they went on Gods Errand amongst them. This is clear in the case of *Lot*, who first lost his goods, and was made a Captive by being in *Sodom*; and though they were restored to him again

again for a while, (one would have thought that should have been a fair warning how he came again into such company) yet because that would not do, a while after you may read how dear *Lot* paid for dwelling in *Sodom*. Poor man ! he lost all that he had, and was fain to fly away without either Flocks or Herds, and little more than his cloathes on his back ; and that which was more sad, to leave some of his own dear Relations behind him, roasting in those dismal flames. Whereas had he never come to *Sodom*, or upon the sight of their wickedness speedily left them, it had been much better with him in many respects. *Jehoshaphat* fared never the better for joyning in affinity with his wicked Neighbours, it had like to have cost him his life. But were it, only loss of Temporals that a man hazarded by such Society, the danger were not so considerable ; but the peril is greater than so ; for by it they make God stand at a distance ; they must never look to have such company and Gods company both together ; I mean, when they do unnecessarily or delightfully converse with God. If therefore you intend to be acquainted with God, you must not have them always in your company whom he hates, and which hate him, and will labour all they can to cool your affections towards him. Wherefore, be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers : For, what Fellowship hath Righteousness with unrighteousness ? And what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with *Belial* ? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel ? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols ? For ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said,

I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People ; wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2. Cor. 6. 14. to the end. But I would not here be mistaken, as if I would commend an ungodly proud separation from all that are not just of our mind; or as if a man ought to have nothing at all to do with wicked men; no, no. Every one ought to do what he can in his place for the good of Souls. O that Christians would thus converse more with their poor, ignorant, carnal, Christless Neighbours! O that they would thus be more acquainted with the wicked, and then they should have never the less of *Gods* company, but the more; but it is an unnecessary delightful associating of our selves with them that I mean, especially such of them which will stifle every spiritual discourse, and divert you from any thing that tends to the promoting of the interest of Religion; and such as have frequently expressed their detestation of the way of Holiness, and make but a mock at your serious Counsels, stop their ears to wholesome Advice, or make some undecent reflections upon the strict profession of Godliness; such as labour to make you believe that all Religion, but that which will consist with their wickedness is but a Fancy. As for such as those, abhor their company, flye from them as those that have the Plague, the marks of Death are upon them, and you may write *Lord have mercy upon us* upon their Doors, but go not in, lest you be Infected.

5. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of unbelief. Unbelief will make your Soul depart from God, and God quite to depart from your Soul. This, This is one of the dreadful and God-estranging sins, which leads on whole Legions against the Almighty; This is that bold daring sin which gives Truth itself the lye, and saith, That the Word of God is false, his Promises airy, his Threatnings but a Wind: But know this, O sinner, such a wind they be, that will rise to a dreadful storm, and turn your strong confidence up by the roots, and blow them into Hell, if you make no more of them than you do.

6. If you would be acquainted with God, beware of sensuality. To be sensual and devilish are near akin. To be lovers of Pleasures, and haters of God, are usually concomitants; in a word, to fare deliciously every day, and to be despised of God, are no strange things. But I wave the further prosecution of these things, because they are largely and excellently handled already by so many of our brave Worthies, See Mr. *Baxters Saints Rest*, and R. A. his *Vindicia Pietatis*.

XII, DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, resolutely and freely give up your self to him, and enter into a most solemn Covenant with him. And here I shall make bold with that reverend Author which R. A. doth mention in his *Vindicia Pietatis*, and present you again with that excellent form with the preparatories to it, which I have lately met with in the forementioned Author. After
your

your most serious addresſes to God, and after a deliberate conſideration of the terms of this Covenant ; and after a thorough-ſearch of your own heart, whether you either have already, or can now freely make ſuch a cloſure with God in Chriſt, as you have been exhorted to . And when you have compoſed your ſpirits into the moſt ſerious frame poſſible, ſuitable to a tranſaction of ſo high a nature, lay hold upon the Covenant, and rely upon his promiſe of giving grace and ſtrength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promiſe. Reſolve in the next place to be faithful, having engaged your hearts, and opened your mouths, and ſubſcribed with your hands to the Lord ; reſolve in his ſtrength never to go back. And being thus prepared, and ſome convenient time being ſet apart for the purpoſe, ſet upon the work, and in the moſt ſolemn manner poſſible, as if the Lord were viſibly preſent before your eyes ; fall down on your knees, and ſpreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord in theſe or the like words.

O moſt dreadful God, for the Paſſion of thy Son, I beſeech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now proſtrating himſelf at thy door ; I have fallen from thee by mine Iniquity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thouſand-fold more the Child of Hell by my Wicked Praſtiſe ; but of thine infinite Grace thou haſt promiſed Mercy to me in Chriſt, if I will but turn to thee with all my Heart : Therefore upon the Call of the
Gospel

Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons, submit my self to thy mercy. And because thou requirest as the Condition of my Peace with thee, that I should put away mine Idols, and be at defiance with all thine Enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee ; I here from the bottom of mine Heart renounce them all, freely covenanting with thee, not to allow my self in any known Sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the Death and utter Destruction of all my Corruptions ; And whereas I have formerly inordinately and Idolatrously let out my Affections upon the World, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it. Humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm Resolution of my Heart : and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice this my Resolution, through thy Assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this World, rather than to turn from thee to the ways of sin ; And that I will watch against all its Temptations, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, lest they should withdraw my Heart from thee ; beseeching thee also to help me against the Temptations of Satan, to whose suggestions,

I resolve, by thy Grace never to yield my self a Servant. And because mine own Righteousness is but menstruous Rags, I renounce all Confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my self a hopeles; helpless undone Creature, without righteousness or strength. And for as much as thou hast of thy bottomeless Mercy offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible Veneration, bowing the Neck of my Soul under the Feet of thy most Sacred Majesty, I do here take thee the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my Portion, and chief good, and do give up my self, Body, and Soul for thy Servant; promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the dayes of my life.

And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, the only means of coming unto thee, I do here upon the bended Knees of my Soul, accept of him as the only new and living way, by which sinners may have access to thee; and do here solemnly, joyn my self in a Marriage Covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry and
hardly

hardly bestead, poore, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, a most loathsome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned Malefactor, unworthy for ever to wash the feet of the Servants of the Lord, much more to be Solemnly Married to the King of Glory: But since such is thine unparallel'd Love, I do here with all my power accept thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to Love and Honour, and obey thee before all others, and this to the Death. I embrace thee in all thy Offices, I renounce mine own worthiness, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteousness; I renounce mine own Wisdom, and do here take thee for mine only Guide; I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my Will.

And since thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee, to take my Lot as it falls with thee, and by thy Grace assisting, to run all hazards with thee, evenly supposing, that neither life nor death shall part between thee and me.

And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy Holy Law, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy Kingdom; I do here willingly put my Neck under thy Yoke, and set my shoulders to thy Burden,

and

and subscribing to all thy Laws, as Holy, Just, and Good; I Solemnly take them as the rule of my Words, Thoughts, and Actions: Promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction, and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because through the frailty of my flesh I am subject to many failings; I am bold humbly to protest, that unhallowed miscarriages contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant; for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God searcher of hearts, that knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guilt, or Reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou espiesst any flaw or falsehood herein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward, to look upon thee, as my God and Father, That ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thy own Blood, and art now become my
Sal.

Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O God the Holy Ghost, who by the finger of thine Almighty power hast turned about my Heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant. Amen. So be it. And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.

The Conclusion.

AND now my Work is done, I must leave you; and whether I shall ever speak to you, or see you, or write to you again while the world stands, I know not: My body is frail; and I am a poor dying man, and before it be long, my mouth will be more stoped than it is, and yours too: And therefore it's high time for us to look about us. As for my part, I have with all the seriousness that I could for my soul, spoke to you, about the great and weighty affairs of your Souls and Eternity. I again call Heaven and Earth to witness, that I have set Life and Death before you; I have in the Name of my great Master been wooing of you to accept of his Son, for your Lord and Husband; himself for your God, Father and Friend. I have told you what the Lord doth require of them that would be in Covenant with him. I have given you a rude Description of him whom I would have you acquainted with

with, I have told you of some of the Glorious Effects of Acquaintance with God. I have told you of the danger of being a stranger to God. I have told you how thankfully some have closed with those Offers, and how well they like their Choice. I have further show'd you what a peaceable State you shall be in, immediately upon your Spiritual Alliance with this Great and Noble Friend. I have told you also of some further benefit and good that will come unto you upon your acquaintance with God. I have given you to understand how desirous the Lord is notwithstanding all that is past, to forget and forgive, and to receive you into Favour, if you will in good earnest return to him with speed. I have again and again propounded this Match to you, and told you as much as I could well do in so short a time; I have stay'd a great while for an Answer, I have put the business forward all that possibly I could; because I see how foolishly and madly you make light of those advantageous Offers that are made to you, I have again and again pleaded with you, as if I were ready to starve, and begging an Alms of you; Nay, if it had been for my very Life, I could not have spoke with more earnestness. I have Expostulated the Case with you; and asked you several Weighty Questions, and you have not, you cannot answer any one of them, but you must condemn your self, and by your own Confession you have nothing in the world to say against the Excellency of this Friend. And therefore you must either speedily come in, upon the invitation, and close with those gracious Overtures that are made to you, or you must without any reason in the world (your self being

Judge) cast your self away. And in hopes that all that have heard me, will not be so mad as to make light of these things, but be asking with some seriousness, that great Question, How shall I do to get Acquainted with God? How shall I do to get a Friend for my Soul? What shall I do to be Saved? I have laid down some Directions for those that are unfeignedly desirous to be reconciled to God; I have told them that they must labour to be thorowly Acquainted with that Strangeness and Enmity that is in their Hearts against God; and of the unspeakable Danger of their being Strangers to God. I have further directed them that would be Acquainted with God, to Labour to get humble Hearts. I have advised that they visit him often, if they would be intimately Acquainted with him; and that not in a transitory way, but to make a Solemn set Visit of it, and to be sure that they do not forget to get Christ along with them. I Counsell'd them also to be much in those Places where he is wont to walk, and to get Intimately acquainted with some of them that know Him very well, and will do their best to get them to be acquainted with him. I have told you, that if you would be acquainted with God, you must kindly entertain, and make much of any Messengers that come from him to you; and if men would make sure work, I desired them as they loved their Souls, that they would follow this great Business with the greatest earnestness and seriousness in the world; and that, what they do, they would do speedily. I informed you what arguments the Scripture puts into our Mouths, which we may urge at the Throne of Grace. I intrusted you, for your Souls

take to take heed of those things which kept God and Man unacquainted; as Namely, all sin in general, but more particularly, Pride, Worldly-mindedness, Hypocrisie, Delight in Wicked company, Unbelief and Sensuality. Lastly, I direct all such as would be at peace with God, to give up themselves to him resolutely and freely, in a solemn Covenant.

And have I been beating the Air all this while? What will you do after all this? What shall become of all these Sermons? Dare any of you all still be contented to be Unacquainted with God? Can you be very well-satisfied, after you have heard of such a Friend, to be a stranger to him? Can any of you look upon your State as safe, while God is your Enemy? O how shall I leave you, with Hearts full of Enmity against your Maker! Alas, alas, poor Hearts! You look very merrily, as bad a condition as you are in; but did you but know how near you are to Everlasting Burnings, I believe it would put a damp upon your spirits, and spoil your Mirth. O how shall I leave that poor sinner, that stands as a person altogether unconcerned! Whereas Death stands ready for his Commission, to fetch him away before God; and where are you then? O where are you then, if you come before God as a stranger? O what shall I do for thee? What shall I say to thee, to prevail with thee! O what Arguments will persuade thee! O how shall we part! Brethren, my hearts desire is that you may all be saved. O that you may all know in this your day, the things of your Peace! O that I could mingle all my words with Tears! O pity, pity, for the Lords sake, pity your precious

souls! O come not here to ask counsel of God,
 and then go away, and take the counsel of the
 Devil. And what will you yet make light of all
 the Tenders of the Gospel? Is Peace, Pardon,
 Reconciliation, and Acquaintance with God, still
 nothing with you? Will you for all this take
 up with a Lifeless Religion, and never mind a
 more spiritual intimate converse with God? As
 the Lord liveth, thou speakest that word against
 the Life of thy soul. But if thou wilt go on, and
 despise God, who can help it? I have told you,
 and told you again, what the end of these things
 will be. VVell once more, I ask thee in the Name
 of God, wilt thou have God for thy Friend or
 no? That is, wilt thou love him above all the
 VVorld? VVilt thou accept him for thy Lord and
 Husband? VVilt thou be ruled absolutely by him?
 VVilt thou lay down thy VVeapons, and turn on
 Gods side, and fight under his banner? VVilt
 thou have Holiness here, and happiness hereaf-
 ter? One would think this is a Question that one
 need not be long a resolving. Come, come away
 for the Lords sake; for your precious Souls sake,
 as you would be owned at the Day of Judgment;
 as you would Rejoyce when most of the VVorld
 shall be filled with unspeakable horrour and per-
 plexity; as you would not hear that heart-rending
 word from the mouth of the JUDGE, *Depart, I
 know you not*, come away, I beseech you! Come
 away! O ye my dear Friends, the Cloud hangs
 over the VVorld, and ere long it will fall with a
 Vengeance. O come out of *Sodom*, linger not for
 the Lords sake, lest the dint of that Storm fall
 upon you: Fire! fire! fire! awake! awake!
 awake!

awake ! The Fire is kindled. What meanest thou, O sinner ! If thou sleepest a little longer in that Bed of Security, thou art a dead man, thou wilt be awakened with Horror, when thou shalt know thy Danger, but not know how to avoid it : And do you still stay ? Make hast ? O make hast, your Glas is almost out, your time almost spent, and Death is hastning apace upon you : I speak it again, make haste, come away, I can't, I can't hold my Peace. How can I endure to see the Ruine of thy Soul, and say nothing ! O follow those Directions which I have given thee out of the Scripture ! Seek the Lord while he may be found, and with all possible speed, seriousness, and gratitude, accept of his Kindness while you may. Methinks some of your hearts seem to be affected ; methinks your Countenances speak you to have some thoughts of returning ; some of you look like persons almost resolved to set upon this great work, O that it may not be almost, but altogether ! Speak in such Language as this to your own Souls. What meanest thou, O my Soul, thus to stand Disputing ? Is this a time for thee to stand still, as if thou hadst nothing to do ? Hark how the King of Glory Calls ! Hark how his Messengers invite you ! Consider how long they have stood waiting for thee ! And shall they go away without thee ? O foolish Heart and Unwise ; wilt thou answer all these Gracious Offers with a flat denial ? Or that which is little better, wilt thou put off all Gods Messengers with some sorry Excuses ? Awake, O my Soul, and look about thee ! How can'st thou refuse when Mercy calls ? How

canst thou deny when Kindness it self asks, in-
 treats, beseecheth thee? Awake for shame,
 up and put on thy Wedding Garments! O that
 this mind might be in you always! O that
 thou wert up and ready? And then happy were
 the day wherein thou wert Born; then happy
 were the day that ever you heard of a Christ,
 of Acquaintance with God, and Reconciliation
 with your Maker. O then how glorious shouldst
 thou be for ever! I Rejoyce to see the Day of
 thy Marriage a coming, when thy Lord and
 Husband shall bring thee home in the greatest
 state, and in infinite Glory to his own House,
 where thou shalt sit like a Queen for ever and
 ever. Behold his Harbingers are coming! Behold
 how many Messengers the Lord hath sent to pre-
 pare his way! Awake, O Zion, and put on thy
 Beautiful Garments! Rise up, O Royal Bride, and
 put on thy Princely Robes! Cloath thee with the
 Sun, and put the Moon under thy Feet. Go out
 and meet the King thy Husband. Behold, O Ja-
 cob, the Waggon of Joseph are coming! Behold,
 O Daughter of Zion, the Chariots, the Chariots
 of thy King and Husband are a coming! They
 are a coming! O why doth not thy Heart leap
 within thee! O why do not thy spirits even faint
 for gladness! Why dost thou not say, It is enough,
 I will go out and meet my Lord before I die?
 When will the Sun be up! When will the day
 break! When, O when will the shadows fly
 away! I will get me up to the Mountains of
 Myrrh, to the hills of Frankincense, I am tra-
 velling for Zion, my Face is towards Jerusalem;
 who will ascend the holy Hill with me? Who
 will

will bear me Company to my Husband's House? Let us go up to the Lords House; Come away, the sun is risen, the shadows are flying away, thousands are gone already. Let Barzillai and Chimham, Old and Young too, go along with the King to Jerusalem. Come from the Highways and Hedges, come with your Wedding-Garments, come quickly, and he will make you VVelcome. The King hath sent to invite us to a Feast, a Feast of fat things, of VVines on the Lees well Refined. Come, for the Table is spread, all things are ready, and his servants stay for us. And will God entertain such Creatures as we are? And will the Lord open his Doors to such loathsome Beggars? VVill the Father receive such Prodigals! Return then unto thy Rest, O my soul, for the Lord will deal Bountifully with thee. VVho is that which I see coming in the Field? VVho is this that comes from the VVilderness? That comes to meet us? Hark! methinks I hear the Trumpet sounding: hark! VVhat's the matter! How do the Mountains Echo! How doth the Air Ring again! VVhat Noise is that which I hear! VVhat Glorious Train is that which I see! whence do they come, and whither do they go? It is my Master's Son (dear soul) thy Lord and Husband with his Royal Attendants. Behold he comes! He comes apace! Leaping upon the Hills, skipping upon the Mountains. He is coming! he is coming! he is even at the Door! ere long thou shalt see the Mountains covered with Chariots and Horses of Fire; the Earth will tremble and shake; the Heavens and the Earth will be all on a Flaming Fire; the King of Glory will *come*, Riding upon the

the VVings of the VVind, accompanied with Millions of his Saints and Angels; he is coming, hear at the door. Go, Vail thy Face, alight and meet thy Husband. He will bring thee into his Fathers Palace, and thou shalt be his VVife, and he will love thee for ever: And thou shalt remember thy Widowhood no more. *Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.
